

Introduction

This report has been prepared in accordance with Article 7.5 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Combating Trafficking in Persons.” It is based on official data and submissions from the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman), the Bar Association, relevant international organizations, 20 non-governmental organizations, 32 central and 69 local executive authorities, as well as the structural units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and territorial police bodies, including monitoring and analytical findings of the specialized police unit.

According to the 2024 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons issued by the United Nations, covering 156 countries, the number of identified victims in 2022 increased by 25 percent compared with 2019, and by 43 percent compared with 2020 — the year most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of identified child victims rose by 31 percent during the same period.

Of the identified female victims, 60 percent were subjected to sexual exploitation. Among male victims, 45 percent were subjected to forced labour, while a further 47 percent were exploited for criminal activities, forced begging, or other purposes.

Between 2019 and 2022, the number of victims of forced labour increased globally by 47 percent. However, only 17 percent of convictions worldwide related to forced labour, while 72 percent concerned cases of sexual exploitation.

Data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) also indicate a shift in the dynamics of trafficking in persons, with an increased number of destination countries to which victims are trafficked. Victims from 162 nationalities were identified as having been subjected to trafficking in persons.

In parallel, through coordinated measures implemented jointly by competent State authorities, civil society institutions, and international partners, operational control over the situation in the field has been maintained. Persons at risk have been afforded protection against such crimes, and identified victims have been provided with comprehensive physical, psychological, and social rehabilitation services.

Legislation, Prevention, Awareness-Raising, Training, and Capacity-Building

In 2024, efforts to strengthen the normative legal framework and institutional mechanisms to combat trafficking in persons continued. A draft law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the ratification of the

Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs was prepared and is currently at the inter-agency coordination stage. Furthermore, with a view to enhancing the efficiency of inter-agency cooperation among State bodies in the fight against trafficking in persons and to ensure the fulfilment of international obligations, the draft National Action Plan for 2025–2030 was developed and submitted to the relevant State authorities for comments and proposals.

In order to raise awareness among citizens travelling abroad for employment, as well as among foreign nationals transiting through or arriving in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan distributed 7,000 awareness-raising brochures to relevant State institutions. Additionally, the official website of the Main Department on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (www.insanalveri.gov.az) published 33 updates on the measures implemented in this sphere.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, awareness-raising seminars were conducted in 31 vocational education institutions operating in Baku and the regions. These events engaged representatives of law enforcement

agencies, youth organizations, the media, commissions on the protection of the rights of the child under local executive authorities, medical professionals, entrepreneurs, and staff of transport, education, social protection, and employment centres, as well as representatives of civil society organizations. A total of 3,000 brochures were distributed to participants.

Representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, and relevant non-governmental organizations participated in interviews and discussions broadcast on national television channels (Khazar TV, Real TV, ARB TV, Space TV, ATV, İTV, Dunya TV). These broadcasts addressed issues such as improving the normative legal framework for combating trafficking in persons, preventing such crimes, strengthening cooperation in the relevant field, and other related measures.

In 2024, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Science and Education, and the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs organized a series of awareness-raising activities on combating trafficking in persons in Baku and across the regions, reaching an audience of more than 11,000 participants.

Under the initiative of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, multiple instructional manuals, public information materials, and other awareness-raising resources on human trafficking were produced. In addition, analytical materials entitled “Strengthening Oversight of Childbirths Outside of Medical Facilities and Identifying Early and Forced Child Marriages Based on Such Incidents” were prepared, disseminated to relevant state institutions, and shared through social media platforms.

The Public Health and Reforms Center of the Ministry of Health developed and disseminated informational posters on social media platforms addressing human rights, the prevention of school dropout and child neglect, and measures against child marriages, among other areas.

Similar multilingual information materials were distributed by Azerbaijan Railways Closed Joint-Stock Company, Azerbaijan Caspian Shipping Closed Joint-Stock Company, and Azerbaijan Airlines Closed Joint-Stock Company onboard international routes, at state border crossing points, and broadcast on information monitors at the Baku International Bus Terminal Complex.

Capacity-building efforts targeting state agencies engaged in combating trafficking in persons were sustained. Senior officers and

personnel from 58 district and city police departments participated in specialized in-service training courses on “Main Directions and Legal Framework of Combating Trafficking in Persons”. In addition, virtual training sessions were conducted with the participation of nearly 1,000 police officers, covering topics including “Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labour as a Form of Transnational Organized Crime”, “Distinguishing Trafficking in Persons from Offences Against Public Morality”, and “Prevention and Proactive Measures Against Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labour”.

In 2024, the Ministry of Science and Education conducted training sessions for 252 social pedagogues assigned to general education schools; the Ministry of Youth and Sports provided training to 160 young individuals; the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs delivered sessions to members of the Children’s Ambassadors Council as well as over 100 representatives and activists from economic regions; the State Customs Committee conducted trainings for 158 supervisory personnel at border crossing points; the State Migration Service organized training for 74 employees; and the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan facilitated capacity-building for more than 50 volunteers from ASAN

Service Centers. These trainings addressed topics including the identification of victims of trafficking in persons and forced labor and their referral to relevant authorities; types of trafficking and social assistance to victims; protection of the rights of trafficking victims, labor migrants, and their family members, including the prohibition of discrimination against these groups; indicators for identifying trafficking victims among vulnerable populations, including migrants and children engaged in begging; detection of forged and misappropriated documents and facial feature identification; social work in education; and ensuring victims' rights to compensation. Additionally, the Academy of Justice provided specialized professional development courses on the protection of trafficking victims' rights for 37 judges, 31 lawyers, and 14 prosecutorial staff members.

Simultaneously, the curricula of training courses for a total of 426 newly admitted personnel in judicial and prosecutorial bodies, as well as the Bar Association, incorporated modules on the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings; international legislation on trafficking (European legislation); social dangers of trafficking crimes; domestic violence and countermeasures; judicial proceedings related to trafficking and

associated criminal cases; and combating online sexual exploitation of children.

Furthermore, the Police Academy included anti-trafficking subjects in refresher courses for cadets and trainees, as well as for young officers recently recruited from graduates of foreign specialized institutions and other higher education establishments within the Republic. Academy staff and cadets produced analytical materials on the geographical characteristics, key indicators, and primary prevention directions concerning trafficking crimes, and authored the article “Application of Operational-Search Measures and Utilization of Their Outcomes in Combating Trafficking Crimes.”

Within the framework of the National Action Plan, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population conducted specialized training sessions on combating trafficking in persons for staff of the State Labour Inspectorate Service’s regional offices; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided similar training for personnel of diplomatic missions and consulates abroad; the State Security Service and the State Border Service organized training for their respective staff; and the State Tourism Agency trained more than 200 representatives of the tourism industry. Personnel of the specialized police unit participated as lecturers in the respective events.

Measures were also undertaken to strengthen oversight of childbirths occurring outside medical facilities and to identify early marriages based on such incidents. Officials of the Ministry of Justice regularly held community outreach meetings in medical institutions, the press, schools, and local executive authorities to inform the public of the importance and legal obligation of birth registration.

To ensure timely identification of children whose births were not registered, a rapid coordination mechanism between civil registry offices and local executive authorities was established through a dedicated “WhatsApp” group, enabling swift exchange of inquiries and operational problem-solving.

As a result of the implemented measures, 23 births were registered, and legal assistance was provided to the parents of 56 children to apply to the courts for the determination of birth facts. In addition, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs prepared and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers a draft normative act setting forth quality standards for services provided in state and non-state childcare institutions.

During the reporting period, to reduce the risk of graduates of state childcare institutions becoming victims of trafficking, social-legal and socio-psychological assistance, as well as employment

support, continued to be provided. Twenty-six graduates were enrolled in vocational training programmes, while 66 children aged 15–18 who were deprived of parental care received general and individual vocational guidance services, resulting in 15 being referred to Regional Employment Branches and nine to job interviews matching their qualifications.

The State Employment Agency, within the framework of the “Towards the Future Together” project, organized seminars and individual consultations on “Career Choice” for 461 children deprived of parental care and studying in state childcare institutions.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population conducted 1,241 monitoring visits regarding the living conditions of children adopted domestically, 24 regarding children adopted by foreign nationals, and 231 regarding children placed with guardian families.

In cooperation with the Social Services Agency, the “Regional Development” Public Union implemented the project entitled Enhancing the Operational Mechanism for Cooperation among Relevant Institutions in the Field of Work with Children in Street Situations. Within the framework of this initiative, meetings were conducted with the participation of representatives of the Ministry of

Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Science and Education, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, the Administration of the Regional Medical Divisions (TABIB), local executive authorities, and non-governmental organizations.

As a result of continuous monitoring activities, 86 out of 100 identified children in street situations were visited in their families; 5 children in a state of neglect were placed in the shelter of the Agency, 1 child was placed in an infant home, support was provided for the issuance of identity documents for 30 children, children not attending school were referred to the Ministry of Science and Education, and those with health-related issues were referred to the Administration of the Regional Medical Divisions (TABIB).

Efforts to enhance the financial sustainability of specialized non-governmental organizations engaged in combating trafficking in persons were also maintained. Within the framework of the grant competition announced by the Agency for State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations, 140,500 manats was allocated to 10 relevant organizations. In addition, the Ministry of Internal Affairs allocated 59,786 manats for the social rehabilitation of victims of trafficking in persons, their placement in shelters, and the provision of one-time financial assistance.

International Cooperation

In the reporting year, in order to increase the effectiveness of combating trafficking in persons, cooperation was further strengthened with relevant international organizations and state and non-state institutions of destination and source countries operating in this field.

Information and experience exchange was carried out with diplomatic missions of foreign states accredited in the Republic of Azerbaijan and specialized international organizations. Furthermore, recommendations and requests were addressed from the United States Department of State, Department of Justice, and Department of Labor; the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA); the United Nations human rights treaty bodies; and the United Nations Human Rights Council within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism..

Representatives of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Working Group on Combating Crime of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM, the Office of the Special Representative of the Council of Europe on

Migration and Refugees, the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) of the Council of Europe, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mission in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Interior of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Vienna International School, and other international organizations participated in meetings, seminars, conferences, and round tables on combating trafficking in persons. These events were attended by officers of the Main Department on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, during which the results achieved in the relevant field and prospects for further cooperation were discussed.

Officers of the Main Department on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan also participated in exchange of experience programs implemented within the framework of projects carried out by various international organizations in the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Belarus, and the Kyrgyz Republic.

The intensity of information exchange with the relevant state authorities of the Republic of Türkiye and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, as countries of destination, was increased, and necessary

legal measures were taken regarding the arrest and extradition of accused persons who had been hiding in those countries.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) signed the Periodic Action Plan on Social Protection and Child Protection for 2024–2025. In addition, with a view to expanding the coverage of social services provided to victims and potential victims of trafficking in persons, meetings were held between the senior management of the structural units of the Social Services Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan and delegations from several universities of the Republic of Türkiye.

As a result of information exchange with the competent law enforcement agencies of foreign states, it was established that three citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan had been arrested by the law enforcement authorities of the Republic of Cyprus and the Republic of Guatemala on charges of trafficking in persons, and that one person among those readmitted to the country had been identified as a victim of trafficking in persons in the Republic of Greece.

Prevention of Forced Labour

The tasks set forth in the National Action Plan concerning the identification of victims and potential victims of forced labour, as well as the elimination of circumstances conducive to the commission of such offences, have been fulfilled.

For the purpose of ensuring the effective organization of this work, 159 events on the topics of labour rights of employees, including the prevention of forced labour and trafficking in persons, were held in Baku and the regions with the participation of 14,530 employers and their representatives. These events were disseminated through the media and social networks.

The State Employment Agency under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in order to assist in the employment and reintegration into the labour market of persons with special social protection needs, has regularly encouraged employers through a programme of partial wage subsidies for social jobs. In addition, 15,571 jobseekers and unemployed persons were enrolled in vocational training courses.

In accordance with the amendments to the Labour Code adopted last year, the following measures have been implemented nationwide: conclusion of employment contracts in electronic document form; electronic delivery of termination orders for employment contracts,

signed with an electronic signature, to the employee's electronic personal account; electronic registration of orders relating to labour relations; communication between employees and employers through electronic accounts; and the application of warnings and restrictions to ensure the correct implementation of legislation.

These innovations have ensured greater transparency in relations between employers and employees, expanded the possibilities for electronic oversight, monitoring, and analysis of labour legislation compliance, and significantly reduced the risk of citizens becoming victims of forced labour.

During 30 on-site inspections conducted by the Labour Relations Monitoring Centre of the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations in order to regulate labour relations at construction sites, it was identified that 57 of 1,002 workers did not have an employment or service (civil) contract. Administrative fines in the total amount of 105,000 manats were imposed on 12 employer legal entities and natural persons.

As a result of inspections carried out by the State Labour Inspectorate Service based on citizens' complaints, it was determined that 676 (+164) persons were employed without an employment contract, and employers were fined a total of 2,643,000 (+268,600)

manats. Furthermore, in seven cases, responsible officials were fined a total of 8,000 manats for compelling employees to perform work (services) not related to their employment functions.

During the review of incoming complaints, in two additional cases involving the employment of persons under the age of 15, administrative fines in the total amount of 4,000 manats were imposed on the offenders.

Based on the request of the State Migration Service, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population issued work permits to 4,251 foreign nationals to engage in remunerated labour activities within the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and extended the validity period of such permits for 5,106 foreign nationals.

In the reporting year, as a result of operational-search measures conducted by the Main Department on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, one (-2) case of forced labour was identified, one (-1) criminal case was initiated, and the investigations established that the victims of these offences had been subjected to forced begging within the country.

During activities aimed at detecting victims of trafficking in persons and forced labour, four migration channels were identified and 15 foreign nationals were detained.

During the raids conducted, 616 minors who were living on the streets, including those engaged in begging and those illegally employed in domestic service, were identified. Lawful measures were taken against 354 parents who had incited them to unlawful acts. In addition, 490 case files were forwarded to the commissions on minors' affairs and protection of their rights under the local executive authorities, as well as to guardianship and trusteeship bodies, for the purpose of resolving the children's social problems.

Criminal Prosecution and Work with Victims

During the reporting period, in order to identify victims of trafficking in persons and forced labour, and to ensure that appropriate liability measures are taken against persons involved in exploitation, the specialized police unit conducted operational-search activities which resulted in the detection of 161 (+2) acts of trafficking in persons, 1 (-2) act of forced labour, and 44 (unchanged) criminal offences involving unlawful acts with documents for the purpose of trafficking in persons.

On the basis of these facts, 15 (-1) criminal cases were initiated and 16 persons (-2; 13 women, 3 men) were charged. In total, investigations into 13 (+2) criminal cases (including 6 from previous years) were completed, and 14 persons (unchanged; 11 women, 3 men) were held criminally liable, with indictments issued against 11 traffickers (+1).

During the reporting period, 15 suspects were specifically accused of human trafficking, while a total of 30 (+9) individuals were implicated in related offenses including sexual exploitation, brothel operation, involving minors in acts contrary to public morality, and the unlawful distribution of pornographic materials or objects. Of these, 16 (+7) persons, including 3 (-2) human traffickers, were apprehended and handed over to prosecutorial authorities.

Currently, the international search for 11 (-1) persons suspected of committing trafficking in persons continues via Interpol channels. Requests have been sent to the relevant authorities for their extradition in accordance with bilateral and multilateral treaties on mutual legal assistance, following the collection of necessary information regarding their whereabouts and case circumstances.

Additionally, 44 (-14) offenses committed using information technologies (including WhatsApp, TikTok, Instagram, and Telegram

platforms) were identified. Criminal proceedings were initiated under the following provisions of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan: Article 144-1 (Trafficking in Persons) — 4 (+1) cases; Article 243 (Attraction to Prostitution) — 6 (+4) cases; and Article 182 (Extortion) — 1 (+1) case.

Regarding criminal cases related to trafficking in persons and forced labour, 91 (unchanged) victims were identified, all citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan (90 women, 1 man). Of these, 53 were subjected to sexual exploitation in the Republic of Türkiye, 35 in the United Arab Emirates, 2 in the State of Qatar, and 1 was subjected to labour exploitation within the country.

Among the victims, 12 were aged between 18 and 25, 49 between 25 and 35, and 29 were over 35 years old. Additionally, 19 were residents of the capital city, 72 from other cities and regions of the Republic. 78 were subjected to exploitation between 2015 and 2023, and 13 in 2024.

The protection of trafficking in persons victims and the targeted implementation of legal, social, and economic measures in this regard have been duly maintained. A one-time financial compensation of 700 manats was disbursed to each of 80 (-10) victims. Additionally, 56 (-12) victims were temporarily accommodated in designated shelters of

the Ministry of Internal Affairs and provided with comprehensive medical services (including HIV/AIDS, gynecological, and therapeutic care), as well as social, psychological, legal, and other necessary assistance.

Furthermore, 18 victims were referred to vocational training courses, 9 individuals were employed, assistance was rendered in the repatriation of one foreign victim, 9 victims were supported in obtaining identity documents, 11 victims received social assistance, and the education continuation of 2 child victims was facilitated through admission to an integration-based boarding school. Moreover, 44 victims were successfully reintegrated with their families.

Among the 69 trafficking victims referred to public unions, 18 received shelter and assistance at the “Clean World: Assistance to Women” Public Union, 10 at the “Children of Azerbaijan” Public Union, and 11 at the “Tamas Regional Development” Public Union. Additionally, 10 victims were supported by the “Family World: Legal Assistance to Families” Public Union, 7 by the “Women of the 21st Century” Public Union, 6 by the “Women’s Initiative and Support for Social Problems” Public Union, and 7 by the “Sails of Hope” Public Union, where they were provided with necessary aid and services.

Within the Social Services Agency under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population, the Assistance Center for Victims of Trafficking provided psychological support to 36 and legal assistance to 13 of the 63 referred victims. Additionally, 3 victims were referred to vocational courses and another 3 were assisted in employment through the State Employment Agency. The children of 3 victims were supplied with school materials.

Support was also extended to 17 potential victims based on citizen petitions and referrals from NGOs. Furthermore, 88 (-10) victims and potential victims received material assistance totaling 5,050 (-250) manats from the relevant Aid Fund of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Members of the Bar Association provided legal aid to 98 victims in total—70 of whom received assistance during court proceedings, and 28 during the investigative phase.

Attention was also paid to the children of victims: 16 were provided with educational materials, 12 were issued birth certificates, 10 were enrolled in pre-school education programs, and maintenance arrangements were organized for another 10 children.

In accordance with Article 14-1.1 (“Recovery and Reflection Period”) of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Combating

Trafficking in Human Beings,” 7 (-3) victims were granted a 30-day recovery and reflection period to restore their condition, avoid the influence of offenders, and make an informed decision regarding cooperation with law enforcement authorities.

Additionally, 10,254 (+628) calls received on the “152” Hotline were investigated, and callers were appropriately referred with explanations regarding their rights.

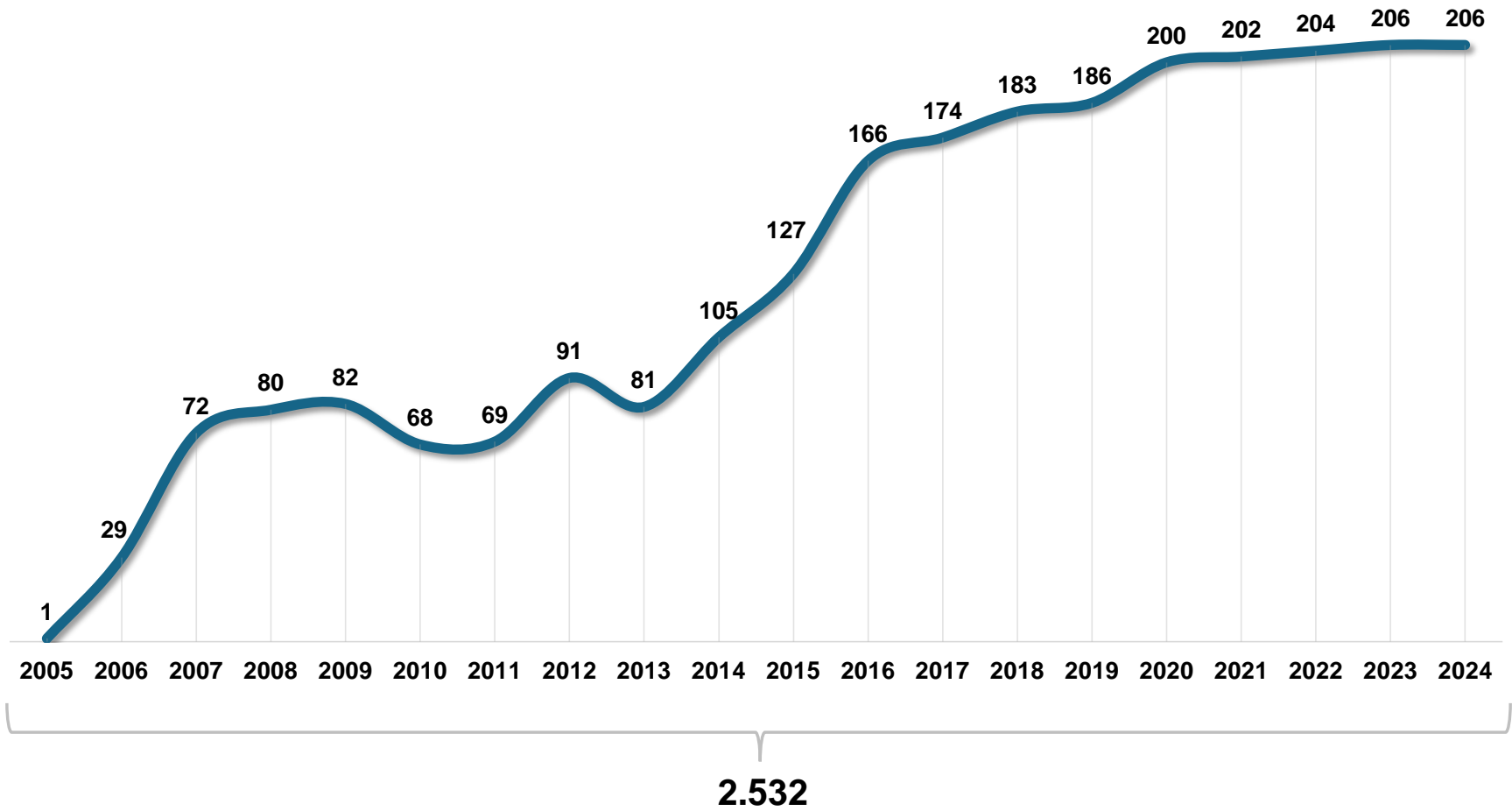
Outstanding Tasks

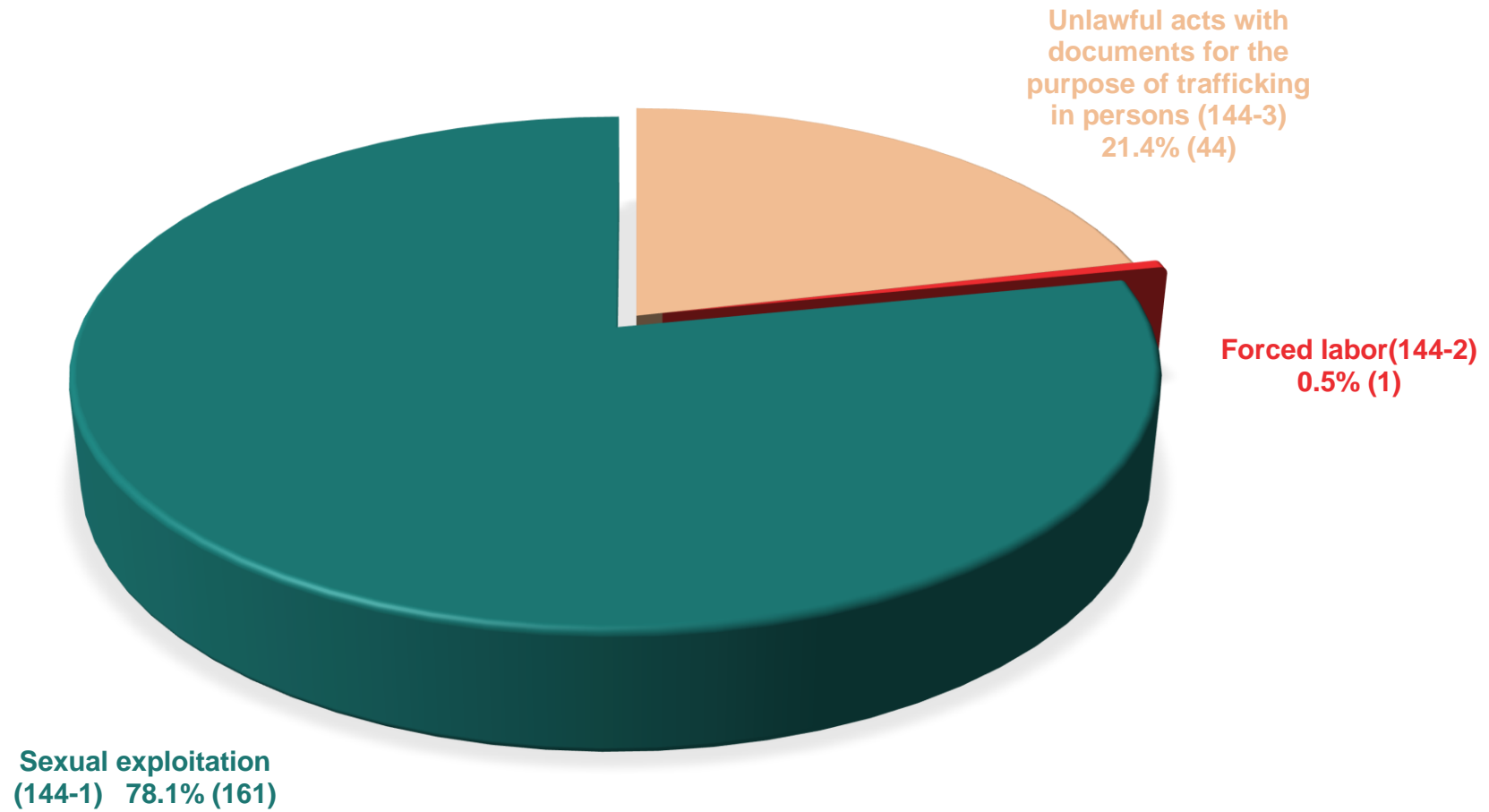
The new National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2025–2030 has been finalized and submitted, taking into account the proposals of the relevant authorities. The primary tasks ahead include the continuous implementation of legal reforms in the relevant field, efficient utilization of existing resources, investigation and prosecution of perpetrators involved in trafficking crimes, identification of victims through the use of artificial intelligence and digital tools, expansion and enhancement of prevention efforts through the application of modern technologies.

Currently, systematic activities are ongoing in these directions.

Dynamics of Trafficking in Persons Offences

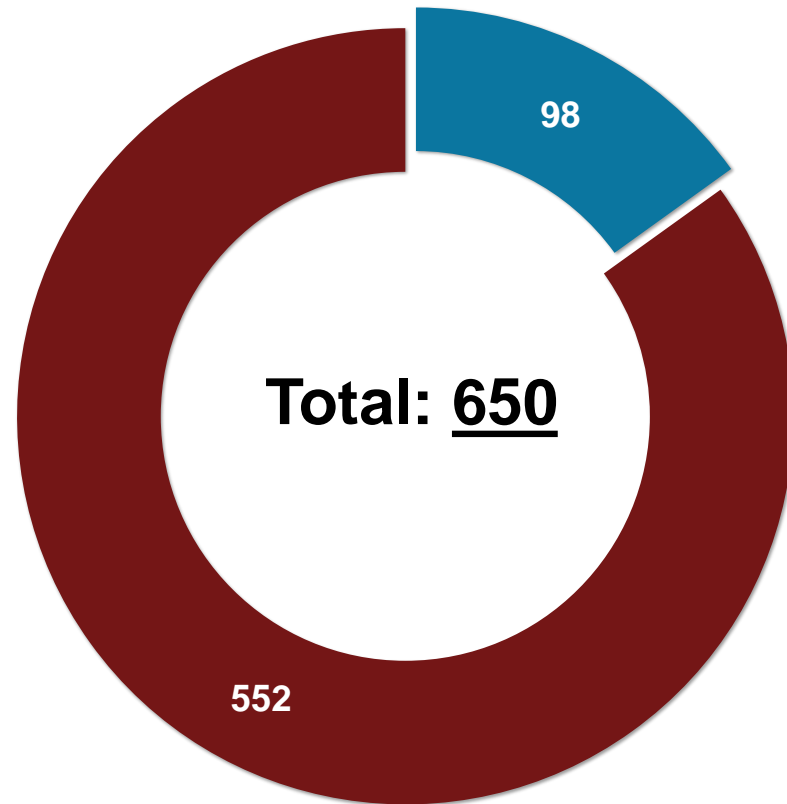
Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan





**Gender Distribution of Traffickers Brought to Justice
2005-2024**

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan

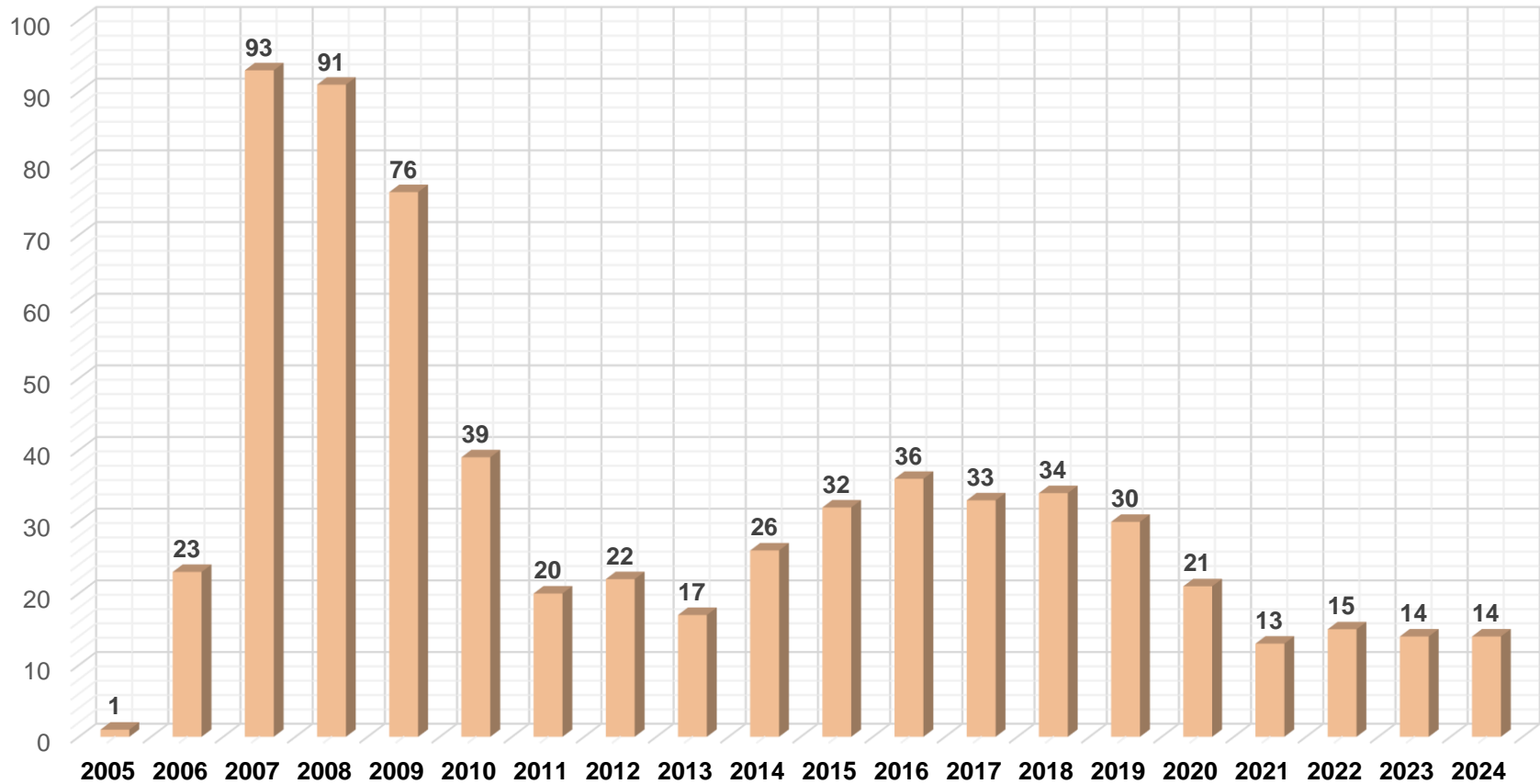


■ Male ■ Female



Traffickers prosecuted 2005-2024

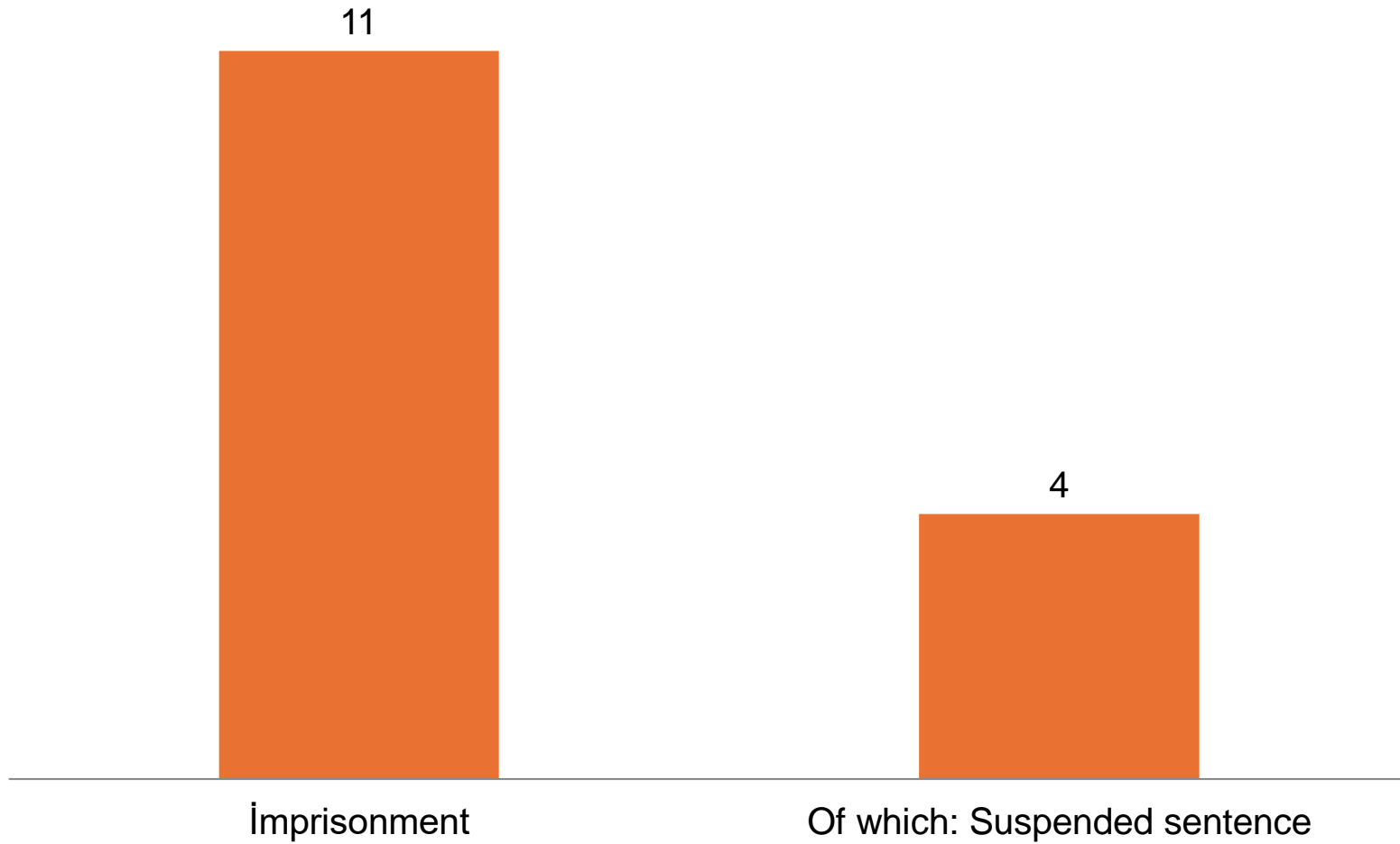
Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan



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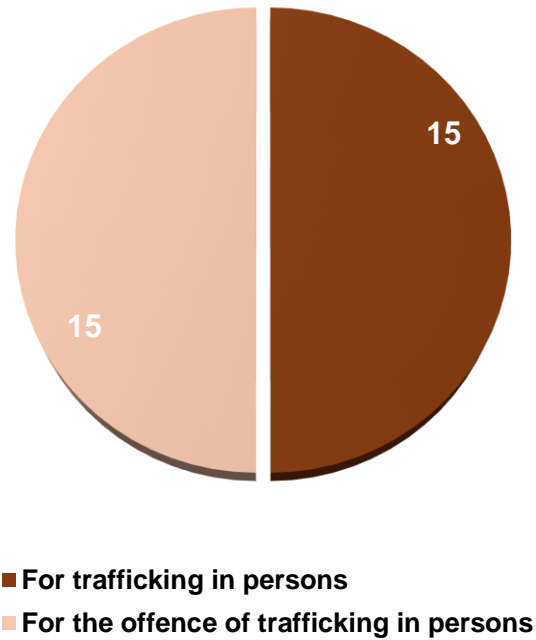
**Punishments imposed on Traffickers
by the Serious Crimes Court**

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan

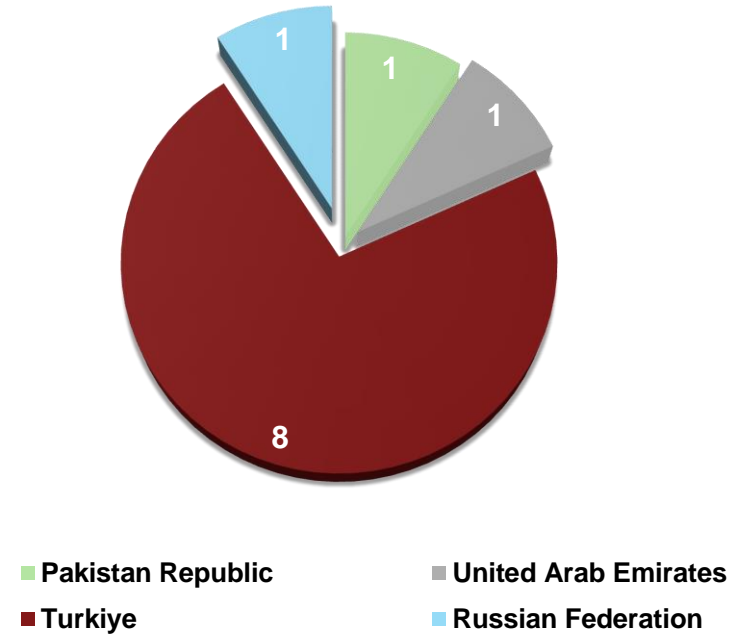




Persons Wanted for Trafficking in Persons Offences

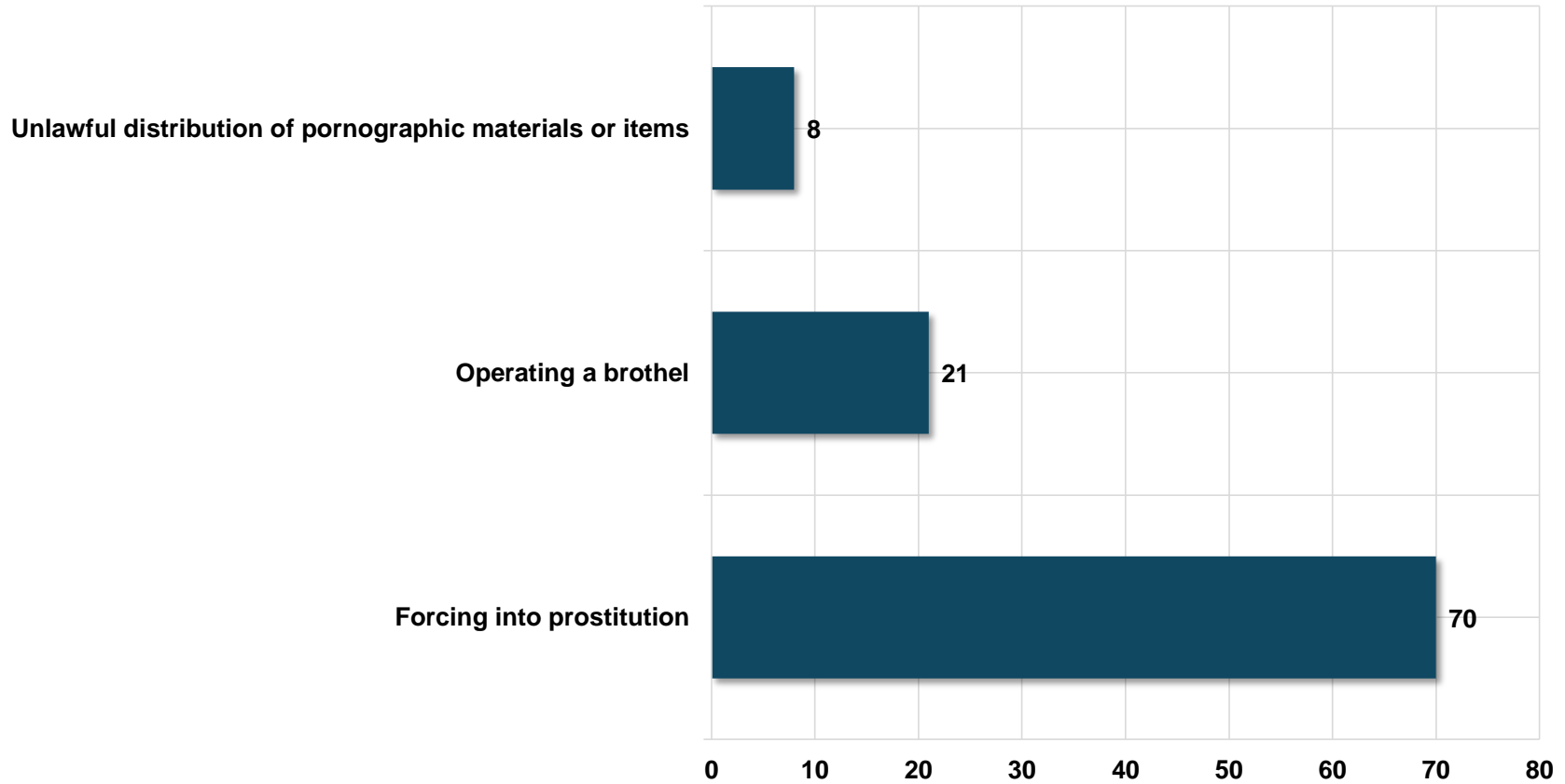


Countries Where Persons Wanted Internationally via Interpol Channels for Trafficking in Persons are Presumed to be Hiding



Offences Against Public Morality

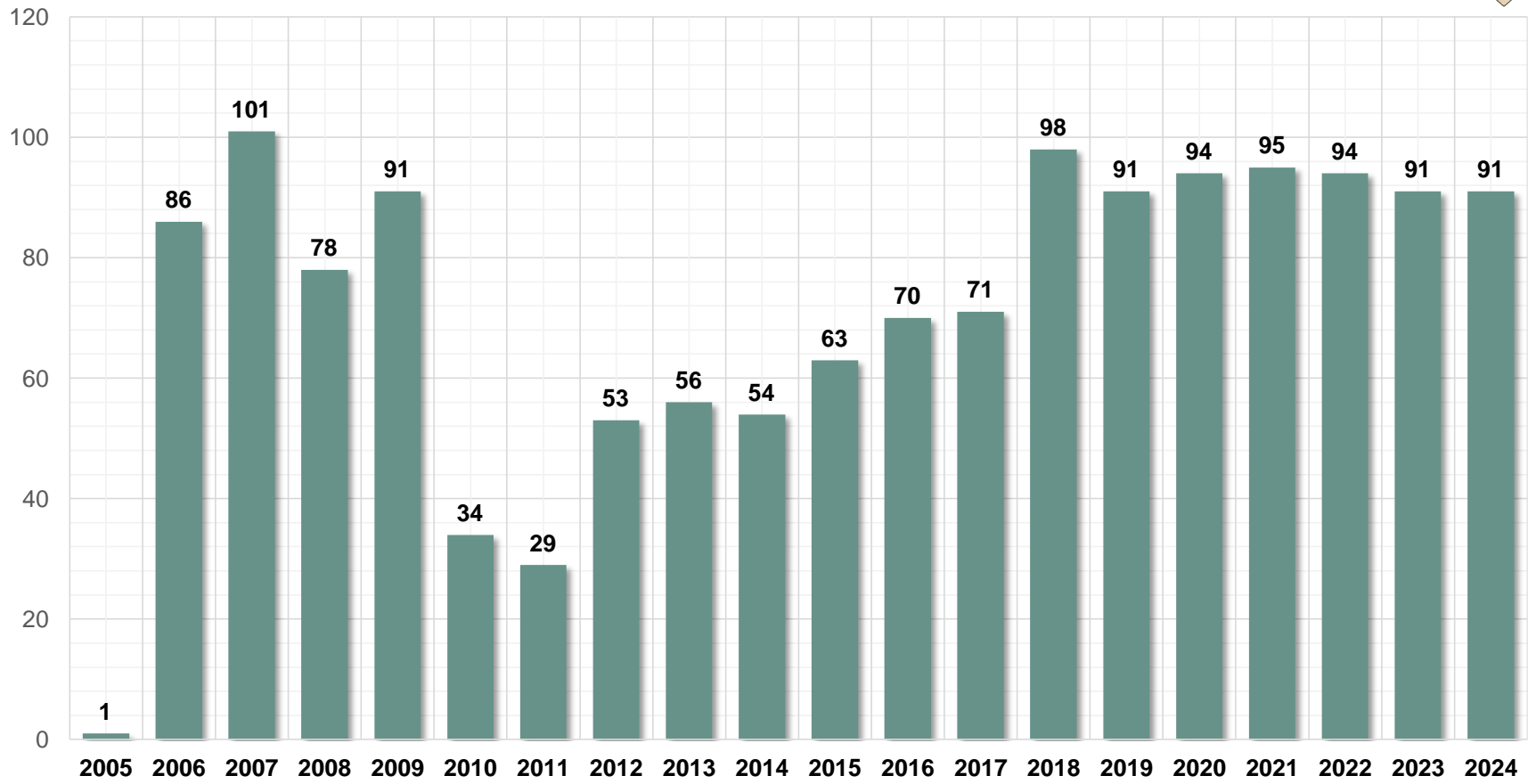
Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan





Victims of Trafficking in Persons Identified 2005-2024

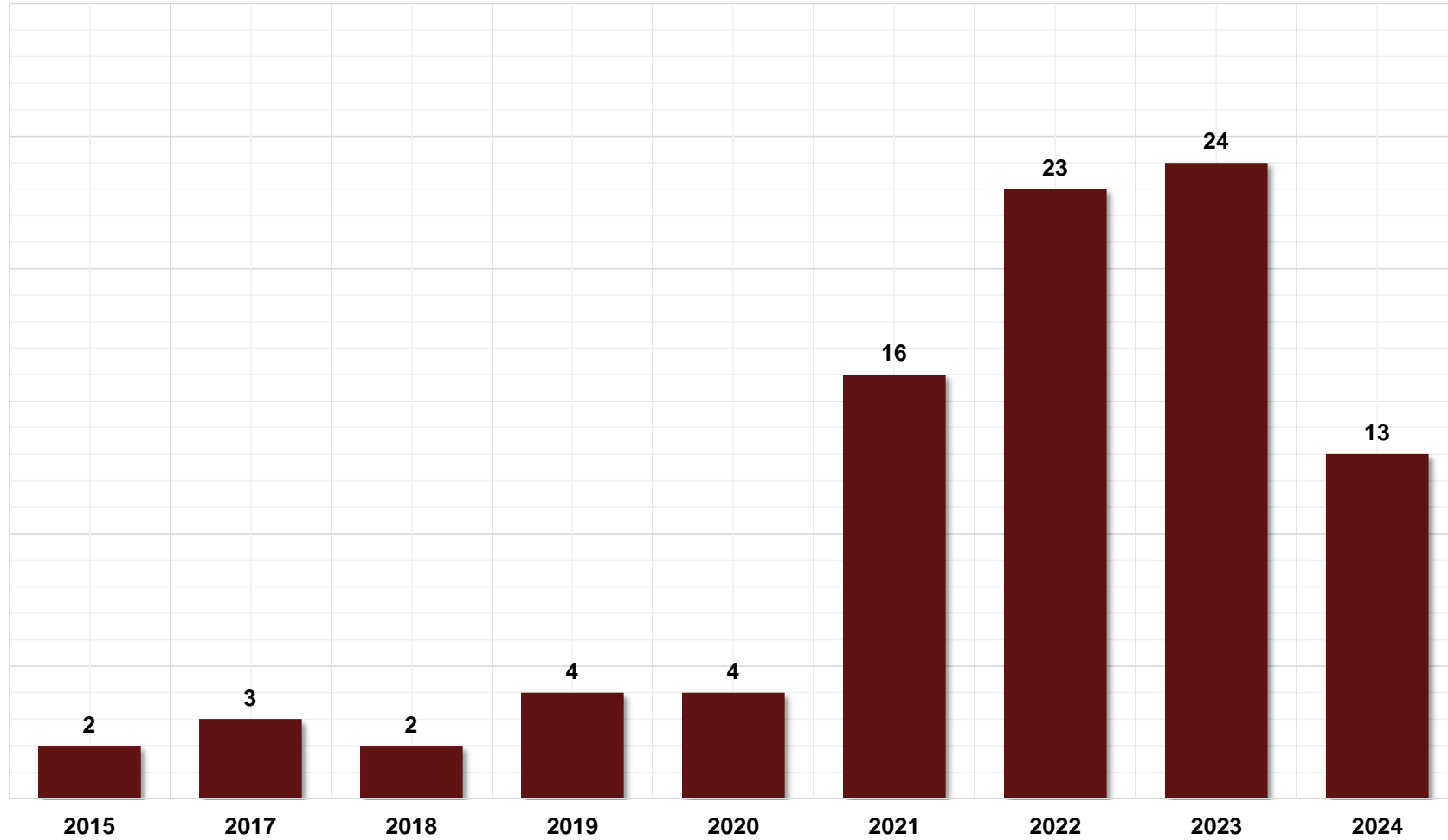
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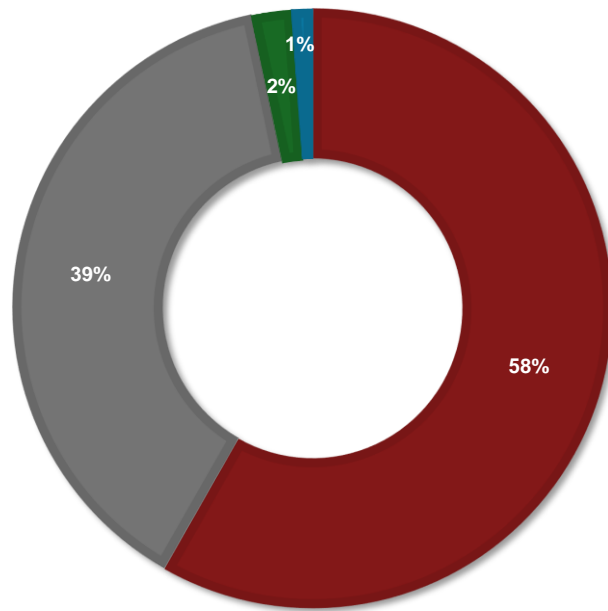
Distribution by Year of Exploitation of Victims of Trafficking in Persons Identified in 2024

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan

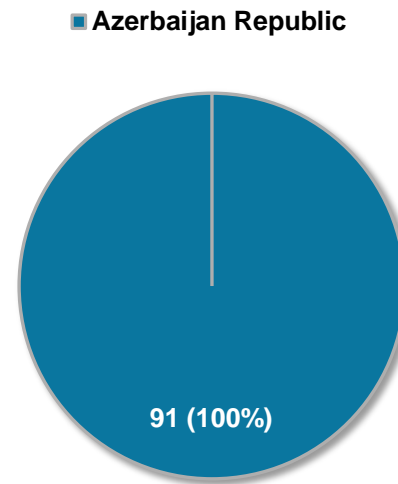




Countries Where Victims of Trafficking in Persons Were Exploited



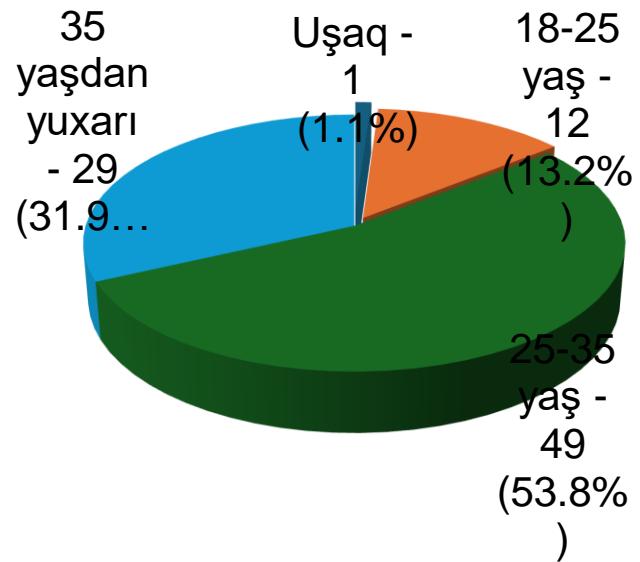
Countries of Citizenship of Victims of Trafficking in Persons



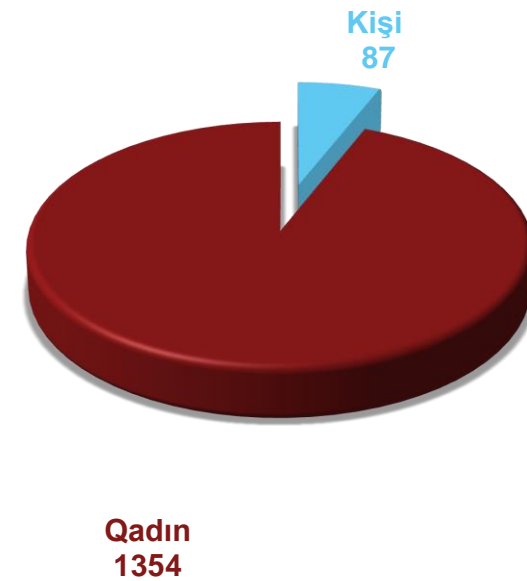
Turkiye - 53 ■ United Arab Emirates - 35 ■ Qatar - 2 ■ Azerbaijan Republic - 1



Age Distribution of Victims of Human Trafficking Identified in 2024

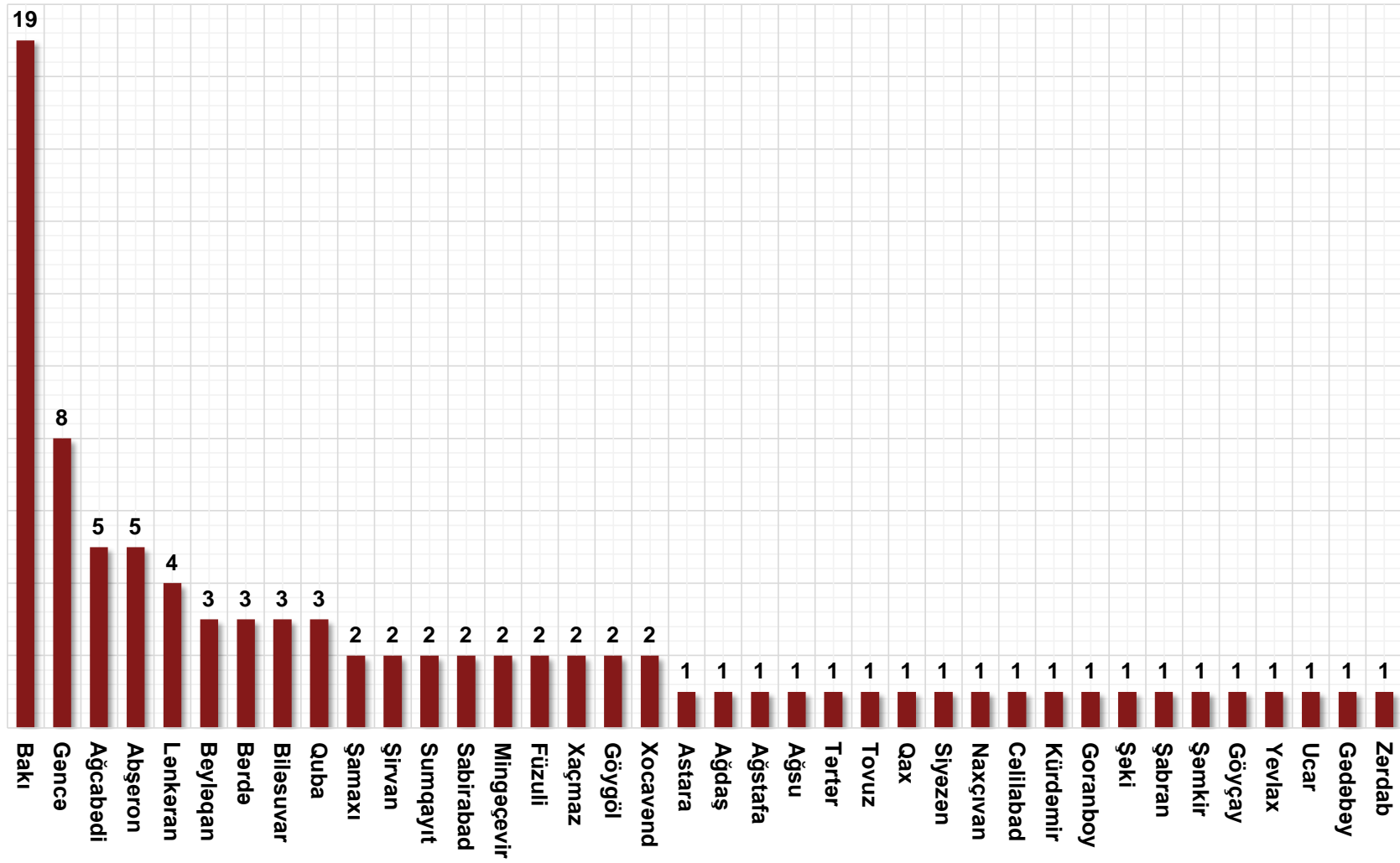


Gender Distribution of Victims of Trafficking in Persons Identified, 2005-2024



Distribution of Victims of Trafficking in Persons by cities and districts of the Republic

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan

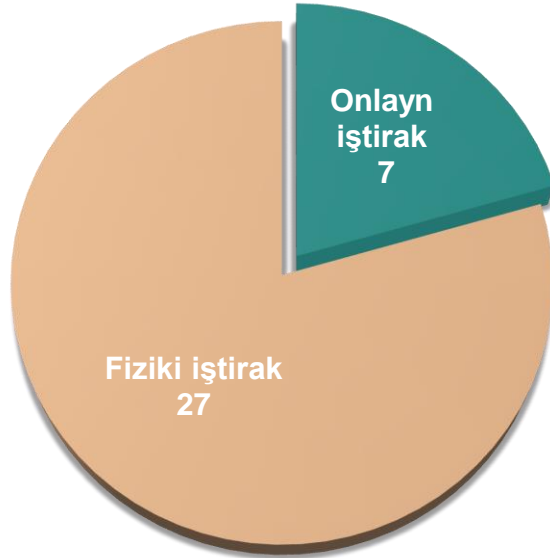


Participation of Officers of the Main Department on Combating
Trafficking in Human Beings in International and Domestic Events in
2024

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan



International and domestic events



Online Participation

