

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Child trade 'still a major problem'

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The trafficking of children is still a major problem in Thailand, a recent study reveals, prompting the government to reiterate its commitment to stamping out the crime.

The study on protecting children from human trafficking was conducted by the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT) which revealed its findings at a meeting yesterday, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwon, his spokesman Lt Gen Kongcheep Tantravanich said.

According to the NRCT, Thailand is a source, destination and transit point for child trafficking.

The council said most trafficked children were smuggled into the country from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar for sexual exploitation or forced labour in various tourist cities.

Besides children from neighbouring countries, children from Thai ethnic groups in the North-east were also falling victim to human trafficking.

Most cases involved girls, but boys were increasingly at risk of being trafficked, it said.

The meeting also discussed the prosecution of at least 77 government officials charged with human trafficking offences since 2012.

Lt Gen Kongcheep said Gen Prawit reiterated the government's intention to stamp out human trafficking, saying the Covid-19 outbreak would not hinder such efforts.

The deputy prime minister also ordered that prosecutions of charged government officials be sped up.

Prevention and protection measures will also be ramped up with a special emphasis placed on combating trafficking gangs which groom children online.

As well as child trafficking, the Labour Ministry was instructed to ensure all migrant workers are registered and documented.

Lt Gen Kongcheep said Gen Prawit also asked the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to provide greater protection for human trafficking victims.