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## Department of State released today the Trafficking in Persons Report 2006

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice presented today the sixth annual Report on Trafficking in Persons (TIP). The Report establishes in clear terms that trafficking in persons is the modern-day slavery, which afflicts virtually all countries. The U.S. government estimates that there are from 600,000 to 800,000 TIP victims in the world and that most victims are minor women. TIP victims are often forced into sexual servitude, forced labor, indentured labor, and into becoming child combatants.

This U.S. Department of State report is mandatory under U.S. Law and it seeks to elevate worldwide public awareness of this problem, as well as to highlight the initiatives of the international community in order to combat human trafficking and support the nations that take effective measures to prevent TIP all over the world.

The TIP Report released today states that Bolivia is a source and transit country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of labor and sexual exploitation. Victims are primarily trafficked within the country, but a significant number are also trafficked to neighboring South American countries and to Spain.

The report adds that the government of Bolivia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however it is making significant efforts to do so. The government of Bolivia made clear progress in several key areas over the last year and, as a result, moved up from Tier 3. Bolivia is placed on Tier 2 Watch List.

Bolivia enacted anti-trafficking laws, raised public awareness, and increased trafficking investigations. It is important that the government intensify efforts to investigate and prosecute traffickers, work with NGOs and local governments to raise public awareness, and increase victim assistance.

This year, as well as the preceding ones, the TIP report presents "Tier assessments" that reflect the performance of the countries in comparison with the minimum standards set forth by U.S. laws for the elimination of TIP. If a country is classified as Tier 3, it means it has neither complied with the minimum standards nor made any effort on that regard. Tier 2 countries do not comply with the minimum standards, but are making important efforts to do so. Tier 1 countries are those that meet the "minimum standards for the elimination of severe forms of trafficking." Bolivia was placed in a special category: Watch List Tier 2, used to include countries that are at risk of slipping to Tier 3 unless serious concerns are addressed.