



THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ANNUAL REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (2016)

Section 45 of the Trafficking in Persons Act Chapter 12:10 mandates the Minister with responsibility for National Security to lay before Parliament, an Annual Report on Trafficking in Persons in Trinidad and Tobago. This report examines the counter trafficking response of the country for 2016.

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INTRODUCTION

Trafficking in Persons, commonly referred to as "*trafficking in human beings, human trafficking, or modern-day slavery*," is recognized as one of the most heinous and shameful crimes against a person. Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking, either as a source country from where victims are procured or recruited; a transit country through which victims are transported or transferred; or a destination country where victims are held and exploited by traffickers.

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, provides the first internationally accepted definition of Trafficking in Persons.

Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol states that trafficking in persons "*shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.*"

Trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation (sex trafficking) or for forced labour (labour trafficking) which includes domestic servitude, are the two main forms of exploitation with sex trafficking being the most profitable, most wicked, and most violent. Traffickers profit from the dehumanization and continuous exploitation of human beings.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO CONTEXT

Trinidad and Tobago became a signatory to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (TIP Protocol) supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime on 9th September 2001, and ratified the Protocol on 6th November 2007. Domestic legislation to give effect to the TIP Protocol was created through The Trafficking in Persons Act (the TIP Act), which was assented to by Parliament on 9th June 2011 and enacted on 2nd January 2013 thereby making the act of trafficking in persons a serious criminal offence in this country.

Trinidad and Tobago is considered a source, transit and destination country for the trafficking of men, women and children mainly for sexual exploitation and forced labour, however, it is mainly a destination country. The South-South migration of persons to this country seeking economic opportunities, many of whom hold irregular immigration status, has placed migrants in situations that make them vulnerable to human trafficking. The data shows that migrants, mostly young adult female, are predominantly affected by human trafficking in this country lured by false promises of jobs, love, and better life chances and exploited for commercial sex and forced labour.

While the majority of identified victims in Trinidad and Tobago have been adults, of note in 2016 was the discovery of two minors—one male and one female—rescued from sex trafficking. The female minor was a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago lured through a newspaper ad for a job while the male minor, a citizen of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, was enticed through a social media platform to take up a job opportunity in this country. This incident highlighted two concerning issues: the susceptibility of minors as targets for traffickers and the occurrence of citizens of Trinidad and Tobago being trafficked within their own country. Effectively addressing this issue required a comprehensive strategy that focused on public awareness, support for victims, and strengthened partnerships.

Specialized Unit to combat trafficking in persons

On 11th January 2013 the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) was established in accordance with Section 11 of the TIP Act to implement the provisions of the legislation and begin investigating cases of trafficking in persons, identifying, and assisting victims, prosecuting offenders, and raising awareness among the populace about the crime. Within the first year of the proclamation of the TIP Act, thirteen (13) victims had been identified and assisted, and nine (9) persons were charged and appeared in court for human trafficking and other related offences.

The National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NTFATIP) was established in July 2014 in accordance with Section 5 of the TIP Act. Its mandate is to develop policies, direct the strategic counter trafficking response of the country and measure and evaluate the progress of Trinidad and Tobago in preventing human trafficking, protecting, and assisting victims, prosecuting perpetrators, and assess the effectiveness of public awareness programmes.

Reporting Requirements under the Trafficking in Persons Act

Section 45 of the TIP Act requires that an annual report on trafficking in persons be laid in Parliament by the Minister responsible for National Security. The report and shall include:

- a) The number of identified victims
- b) The number of initiated investigations
- c) The number of persons arrested
- d) The number of commenced prosecutions and their outcomes
- e) Any other pertinent matter which the Minister considers necessary.

The 2016 Annual Report on Trafficking in Persons examines Trinidad and Tobago's counter-trafficking response within the '4-P Framework'—Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnerships. The data findings in this report might be impacted by the following factors: under- or inconsistent identification of victims of human trafficking, confidentiality concerns affecting the reporting of some variables, or general lack of available information.

1. PREVENTION

Preventing trafficking in persons necessitates informing and educating the population about the crime of trafficking, how it affects communities and the guiles employed by the traffickers to enslave individuals. Initiatives include public awareness campaigns through the engagement of multiple-media channels, including press, radio, and television, as well as seminars, workshops, and presentations. It also requires well-trained staff capable of identifying vulnerabilities, recognizing trafficking victims, and disrupting the operations of traffickers.

1.1 National Plan of Action

In 2016, the NTFATIP established a National Task Force Steering Committee (NTFSC), comprising Permanent Secretaries from key Ministries and chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Security. The NTFSC drafted a National Plan of Action for the period 2016-2020 that included key measures for:

- Prevention of trafficking in persons and trafficking of children
- Identification, assistance, and protection of victims
- Prosecution of traffickers
- Fostering partnerships and collaboration

The initial draft underwent a review by key stakeholders, and their feedback was incorporated before submission to Cabinet for approval. Once approved, the NTFSC will play a pivotal role in steering the implementation of the National Plan of Action.

1.2 Public Outreach

In 2016, the CTU implemented a series of initiatives aimed at raising awareness and enhancing staff capacity. The National Public Awareness campaign, initially launched by the CTU in 2015 to educate the public about trafficking in persons, particularly focusing on child trafficking, extended through May 2016. Multiple video and audio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on human trafficking were produced and broadcasted, complemented by newspaper articles to disseminate information. Additionally, ten (10) interviews were conducted with various media outlets to stimulate public discussion on human trafficking.

A heightened emphasis on child trafficking led to a strategic partnership between the CTU, the Witness and Support Unit of the TTPS, and the Children's Ark for the launch of the Anti-Child Trafficking Campaign. This initiative involved the execution of thirty-two (32) sensitization sessions at primary and secondary schools, as well as youth organizations, reaching over four thousand young boys and girls.

This youth campaign culminated in a fundraising luncheon hosted by the Children's Ark, featuring guest speaker Anuradha Koirala. Ms. Koirala, a CNN Hero and anti-trafficking activist from Nepal, is the founder of 'Maiti Nepal,' a non-profit organization advocating against human trafficking and supporting women's protection with rehabilitation homes across Nepal.

Additionally, the CTU collaborated with and supported the locally produced film 'Trafficked,' which aired on the television station TV6. Subsequently, the CTU utilized the film during sensitization sessions to further enhance awareness.

1.3 Sensitization Campaigns

To fulfill its mandate of enhancing awareness about human trafficking, the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) conducted sensitization sessions for governmental agencies and the Judiciary. Collaborating with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the CTU organized workshops for School Social Workers from the Student Support Services Unit of the Ministry of Education. The goal was to equip them with the ability to identify trafficking indicators among students and offer support to those potentially in exploitative situations.

In March 2016, IOM led sessions for the staff at the Hilton Hotel Trinidad and Tobago and the Prison Service. In April 2016, a two-day counter-trafficking workshop took place in collaboration with the Division of Health and Social Services of the Tobago House of Assembly and the CTU. This workshop was specifically designed for representatives from various Trinidad and Tobago government agencies.

A total of forty-four (44) sensitization sessions were conducted, reaching four thousand eight hundred and twenty-one (4821) participants across diverse organizations. Table 1 provides an overview of the training and sensitization sessions held in 2016.

Table 1: Training and Sensitization Sessions to the Public

Organization	# Sensitization Sessions	Number of Participants
Cascade School for the Deaf/ Children's Ark/ Victim and Witness Support Unit	1	30
COSTATT (Social Studies Class)	1	25
Consular Officers (to be posted abroad)	1	10
Faith-based organizations	4	170
Government Agencies	3	88
Hotel Industry	1	2
International/ Regional Organizations	1	3
Judges of the CCJ	1	6
Primary Schools	4	220
Regional Judges and Magistrates	1	20
Secondary Schools	17	3919
TTPS First Division Officers	2	65
TTPS Chaguanas	1	25
TTPS Youth Clubs	2	55
Trinidad and Tobago Foreign Missions	2	4
Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service	1	30
Tobago House of Assembly, Division of Health and Social Services		40
Youth Groups	1	109
TOTAL	44	4821

1.4 Operation of Hotline 800-4CTU

The toll-free hotline 800-4CTU was launched in March 2015 to enable members of the public or victims to report suspected trafficking in persons. The hotline was designed to receive tips about potential situations of human trafficking to initiate an investigation by law enforcement. In 2016, the hotline received twenty-three (23) calls, underscoring its purpose and intention in serving as a crucial tool in the identification and reporting of potential trafficking cases.

1.5 Social Media

The utilization of social media networks has become a primary means for people to engage in modern societies. The online landscape has, however, created new avenues for traffickers to identify, contact, and exploit victims through deceptive tactics.

In response, the CTU has established and actively maintains a social media presence on various platforms:

- **Facebook:** Counter Trafficking Unit TT
- **Twitter:** @CTU_TT
- **Instagram:** @countertraffickingunit_tt
- **YouTube:** Counter Trafficking Unit TT
- **Email 1:** countertraffickingunit@mns.gov.tt
- **Email 2:** countertraffickingunit@gmail.com

These channels serve as vital tools for disseminating information regarding human trafficking and the activities of the CTU to the public. Moreover, they provide members of the public with opportunities to interact with the Unit, allowing them to comment, pose questions, or submit reports.

1.6 Staff Training

Enhancing Organizational Capacity Through Diverse External Training Initiatives

To bolster organizational capabilities, a variety of external agencies provided capacity-building training, aimed to empower CTU staff members with specialized skills and knowledge. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the training programs delivered (to staff) by these external agencies.

Table 2: Training Sessions for CTU Staff

Training Organization	Course	Staff in Attendance
Embassy of Colombia	Spanish Language Training for Public Officers	1 Director 4 Police Officers
Regional Counter Drug Intelligence Training School	Source Development and Handling	3 Police Officers (1 Sergeant, 1 Corporal, 1 WPC)
UN Information Centre/UN Commission on Human Rights	Human Rights and Gender Sensitivity	All staff
US Department of State Antiterrorism Assistance Programme	Behavioural Observation Skills	2 Police Officers (Cpl, WPC) 1 Immigration Officer
US Department of State Antiterrorism Assistance Programme	Interviewing Terrorist Suspects	1 WPC
International Organization for Migration	Workshop to Develop a TIP Manual for Law Enforcement Officers	1 Police Corporal 1 Immigration Officer
University of the Southern Caribbean/Ministry of National Security	National Security in the Caribbean: Emerging Threats, Dynamics & Challenges	Director, Senior Legal Officer 5 Police Officers
Rape Crisis Centre	Operating Hotlines	All Authorized Police Officers

INTERPOL Global Task Force on Human Trafficking

In 2016, INTERPOL launched a two-and-a-half-year project funded by the Government of Canada, to provide specialized training to investigators and immigration officers. The aim of this project was to enhance operational expertise and regional coordination to combat human trafficking. Participating countries included Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Curacao, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands and Venezuela.

Training provided to local law enforcement and immigration officers under this project in 2016 are depicted in Table 2a below:

Table 2a: Specialized Training Sessions provided by INTERPOL

Courses	CTU Staff in Attendance
Project to Combat Human Trafficking in the Caribbean:	1 Police Officer
Introduction to the Trafficking in Human Beings Phenomena	1 Immigration Officer
Project to Combat Human Trafficking in the Caribbean:	1 WPC
Curriculum Development Training Workshop	
Victim Identification, Referral and Assistance	1 Director
	2 Police Officers (Insp, WPC)
Human Trafficking Training for Legal Authorities	1 Senior Legal Officer
Investigative Skills Part 1	2 Police Officers (Insp, Cpl)
	1 Immigration Officer

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for Staff Well-Being

In acknowledgment of the impact that secondary trauma and compassion fatigue can have on the mental health of CTU staff, the Ministry of National Security approved an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). To address concerns related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and secondary trauma, two EAP retreats were conducted for CTU staff in July and October. These retreats served as essential platforms for addressing and mitigating the challenges associated with the demanding nature of their work.

2. PROTECTION

Protection refers to the measures taken to screen, identify and rescue the victim, and to ensure their safety, recovery, and reintegration. This includes providing access to shelter, medical care, legal assistance, and other support services aimed at addressing the physical, psychological, and social needs of the victims. It also involves creating a supportive environment that empowers survivors and safeguards them from re-victimization.

In ascertaining whether a case qualifies as trafficking in persons, three elements must be present based on the definition of the phenomenon:

1. **Action:** The recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining an individual. Notably, sex trafficking involves additional actions like patronizing, soliciting, and advertising an individual, distinct from labor trafficking.
2. **Means:** The means involve force, fraud, or coercion. Force includes physical or sexual abuse, assault, and confinement. Fraud includes false promises related to work/living conditions, wages, or contract deception. Coercion may manifest as threats, debt bondage, psychological manipulation, or document confiscation.
3. **Purpose:** Exploitation for a specific purpose, such as compelled labor, services, or engaging in commercial sex acts.

For cases involving individuals under the age of eighteen (18), demonstrating force, fraud, or coercion is not necessary.

2.1 Investigations, Screening, and Identification of victims

In 2016, the CTU received eighty-nine (89) reports of suspected human trafficking cases from various sources such as the Immigration Division, Police Stations, foreign missions, confidential informants, NGOs, and the CTU hotline. Fifty-five (55) of these reports were deemed credible, prompting investigations. A total of one hundred and sixty-three (163) individuals were screened resulting in sixteen (16) potential victims being identified. These included one (1) male minor, two (2) adult males, one (1) minor female, and twelve (12) adult females. Intensive investigations ensued to corroborate statements before a final determination by the investigators. Table 3 below shows suspected victims categorized by nationality, gender, and type of exploitation.

Table 3: Number of Suspected Victims by Nationality, Gender and Type of Exploitation (2016)

Country of Nationality	# Male	Type of Exploitation	# Female	Type of Exploitation
India	2	Forced Labour	8	Forced Labour
Nepal	0	N/A	1	Forced Labour
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1	Sexual	0	N/A
Trinidad and Tobago	0	N/A	1	Sexual
Venezuela	0	N/A	3	Sexual
Total	3		13	

2.1.1 Victim Identification (2016)

The Counter Trafficking Unit and the Labour Inspectorate conducted intensive investigations into the suspected labour trafficking cases, however it was determined that the matter was a labour/contractual dispute and not one of human trafficking. The dispute was resolved and the employer of the eleven (11) persons from Nepal and India paid for the employees' repatriation to their home country. The other five (5) persons were determined to be victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Table 4 highlights the nationality, gender, exploitation, and age of the victim at the time of rescue.

Table 4: Identified Victims (2016) by Nationality, Gender, Age and Type of Exploitation

Nationality	Gender	Age at Time of Rescue	Type of exploitation
St. Vincent	M	17	Sexual servitude
Trinidad and Tobago	F	17	Forced prostitution and sexual servitude
Venezuela	F	22	Forced prostitution
Venezuela	F	22	Forced prostitution
Venezuela	F	29	Forced prostitution

2.1.2 The Act: Targeting, Recruiting and Transporting Victims

Trafficking in Persons is a transnational organized crime involving a network of persons in the source and the destination countries. Recruiters in the source country target persons with vulnerabilities and deceptively offer an 'opportunity' that the victim perceives would lead to a better life. Traffickers in the destination country coordinate the transportation, harboring, and exploitation of unsuspecting victims.

The three victims from Venezuela were recruited through word of mouth by persons known to them in their home country, who told them about jobs in Trinidad that paid 'good money.' One was 'offered' a job as a domestic housekeeper with a prominent family while the other two were recruited as bartenders. The male victim was offered a job as security guard by persons he met online on a particular social website. The victim from Trinidad and Tobago responded to a newspaper ad for a job as a bartender/ waitress and was 'interviewed' in person by the alleged trafficker. In all cases, the victims were experiencing some level of economic hardship and /or family difficulties and were convinced that the job opportunities were legitimate. The traffickers in Trinidad made all the travel arrangements for the foreign nationals who decided to travel to Trinidad to better their circumstances, communicating with the victims mainly via WhatsApp.

2.1.3 The Means: Control Methods

Once the victims from foreign countries arrived in Trinidad, the traffickers took them to apartments, locked them in a room and took away their passports and phones. Victims reported that the traffickers, or their accomplices, physically and violently assaulted them. The female victims were forced into prostitution and sexual servitude. Several times a day the traffickers sold the victim for sex to 'paying clients.' The victims stated that there were cameras located throughout the apartments where they were kept to monitor their movements. They were given food once per day – in the afternoon. In one case, the trafficker forced the victim to drink hot pepper sauce as punishment.

...the trafficker forced the victim to drink hot pepper sauce as punishment.

The male victim was subjected to sexual servitude and physical violence.

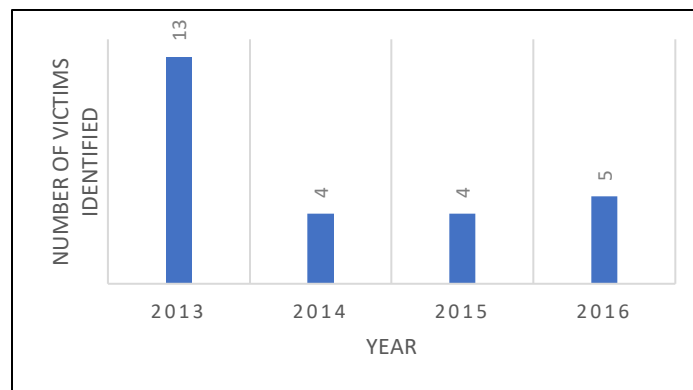
The female victims stated that they were taken by their traffickers to various hotels, apartments and private homes and forced to perform sex acts. The traffickers controlled how many men they had to have sex with, how long the men could stay with the victim and collected the money paid by the 'clients.' If the victim did not want to perform the sex act, they were violently beaten by the trafficker. All the victims stated to investigators that they were fearful for their life.

...victims stated they were "fearful for their life".

2.1.4 Victims Identified between 2013-2016

Since the proclamation of the TIP Act in 2013 twenty-six persons were positively identified as victims of human trafficking: five (5) in 2016, four (4) in 2015, four (4) in 2014 and thirteen (13) in 2013. Twenty-two of the victims were female and four were male.

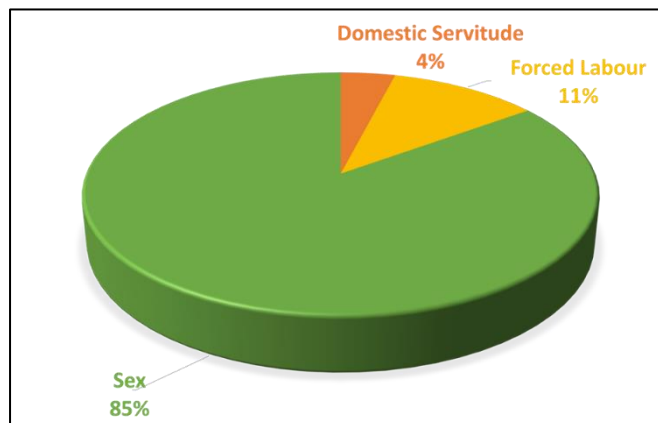
Chart 1: Number of Identified Victims (2013-2016)



2.1.5 Type of Exploitation

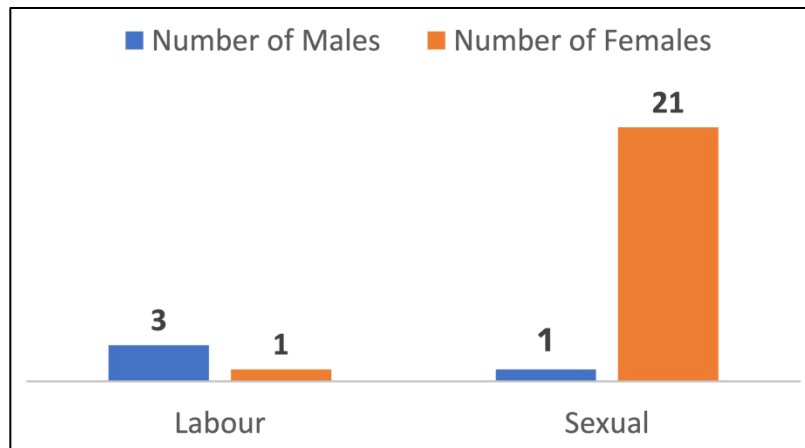
In Trinidad and Tobago, most of the victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation. The data showed that of the twenty-six (26) victims identified for the period 2013-2016, twenty-two (22) have been subjected to sexual exploitation (including prostitution and sexual servitude) and four (4) to forced labour (including one case of domestic servitude).

Chart 2: Type of Exploitation



Women have been the most vulnerable to trafficking as twenty-two (22) of the twenty-six (26) victims were female—twenty-one (21) to sex trafficking and one to forced labour in the form of domestic servitude.

Chart 3: by Gender (2013-2016) Type of Exploitation

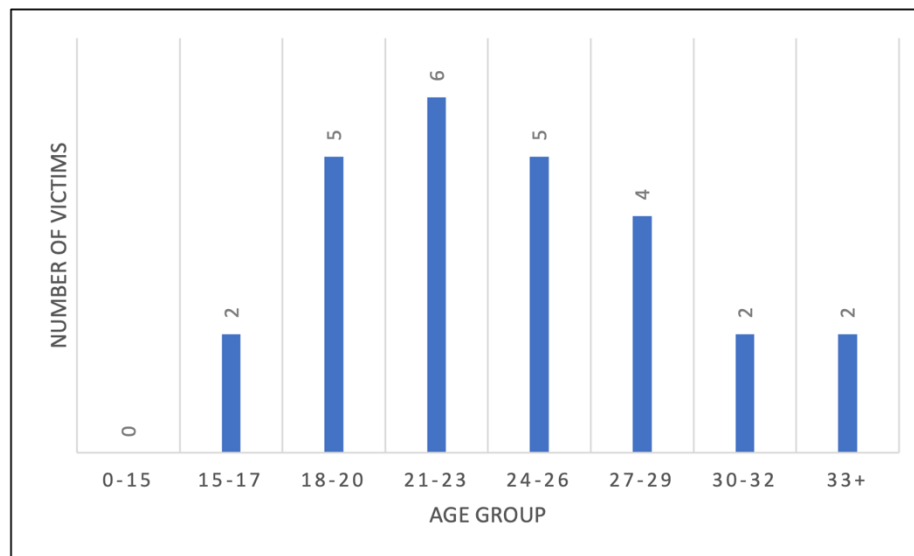


2.1.6 Age of Victims

In 2016, the ages of the identified victims ranged from 17 to 30 years old. At the time of rescue, two victims—one male and one female—were minors aged seventeen (17); one female was aged twenty-nine (29), while the other two were aged twenty-two (22).

Over the period 2013 to 2016, twenty-two (22) of the twenty-six (26) victims were under the age of thirty. This age group is consistent with international findings that traffickers target young adults. Chart 4 displays the age groups of all of the victims identified by the CTU since 2013

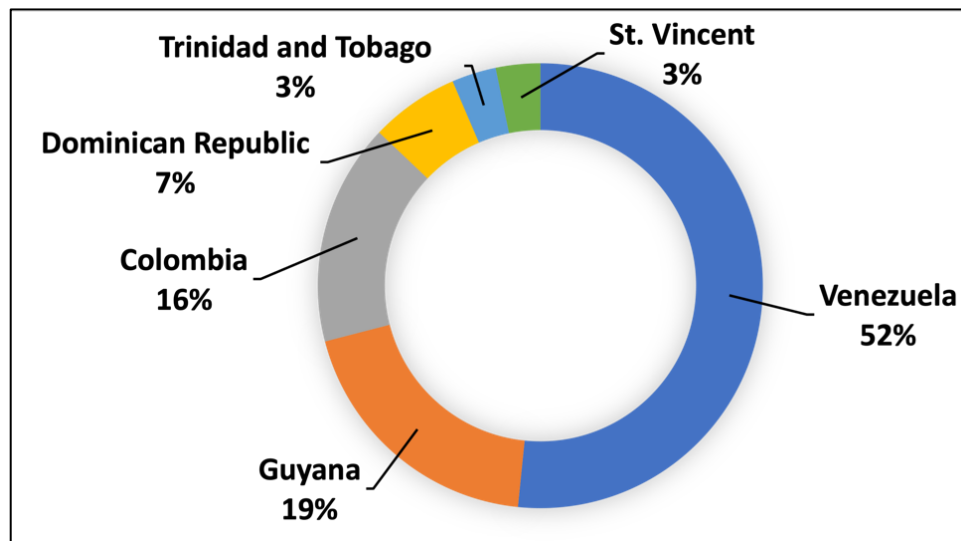
Chart 4: Age of Victims (2013-2016)



2.1.7 Nationality of Victims

Globally, most detected victims of trafficking in persons are foreigners in the country of detection; migrants are more vulnerable to human trafficking with the majority trafficked regionally and internally. This trend is observed in Trinidad and Tobago as ninety-three percent (93%) of the victims identified have been foreign nationals from Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, St. Vincent, and Venezuela.

Chart 5: Nationality of Victims



2.2 Assistance

Providing assistance to and protecting victims of trafficking involves safeguarding their privacy and identity, as well as addressing their physical, psychological, and social needs. Key indicators such as age, gender, nationality, and the type of exploitation endured guide the type of assistance required. It is essential to assess each victim to determine their immediate and short-term needs.

Key victim protection efforts include rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration, and centers on identifying and referring victims to protective, psychological, and legal services. Part VI of the TIP Act sets out the assistance and protection to be provided to victims of trafficking most notably:

- all steps necessary to identify the victims of trafficking shall be taken,
- a victim of trafficking shall be given reasonable protection to prevent recapture,
- the victim shall have an opportunity to consult with an attorney-at-law or other appropriate persons or agency with respect to their rights, safety, and welfare,
- victims who are witnesses shall be eligible for witness protection,
- victims who are foreign nationals can receive appropriate housing, education, and training opportunities; psychological counselling; legal assistance and legal information; and medical assistance while they remain in T&T
- appropriate permits or other required authorization to allow the victims and dependents, to remain and work in Trinidad and Tobago for the duration of the criminal prosecution against the traffickers,
- safe return of the victims of trafficking who do not desire to remain in T&T, and any accompanying dependent children, to their countries of citizenship or lawful residence.

2.2.1 Accommodation

Accommodation for victims and suspected victims has been the greatest challenge for the CTU as there were no government shelters for victims of human trafficking and limited space at NGO-run facilities. Once rescued, a victim must be immediately placed into safe accommodation and not in detention facilities. Section 37 (3) of the TIP Act states:

“In the absence of exigent circumstances, victims of trafficking, once identified as such, shall not be housed in prisons or other detention facilities for accused or convicted criminals.”

Consequently, suitable accommodation is of utmost importance.

In 2016, various initiatives were undertaken to provide essential support and accommodation for victims of trafficking. The CTU provided accommodation for two victims at a private women's hostel, while the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Security secured a short-term lease for a property in San Fernando to house additional identified victims. A shelter in Gasparillo, specializing in aiding victims of domestic violence, offered temporary housing for both potential and identified victims. The International Organization for Migration contributed financial support specifically designated for accommodation and care supplies.

2.2.2 Physical and Mental Well-Being

Once identified it became necessary to provide medical attention to victims and meet their personal needs including food, clothing, and intimate supplies. With most victims experiencing trauma, psychological counseling became a crucial component of rehabilitation. The Family Planning Association, the Rape Crisis Center, and various private professionals, who volunteered their services to shelters and NGOs, also extended medical assistance and psychological counseling to the victims. The Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago played a vital role, providing accommodation, care, medical attention, and psychological counseling to the two minor victims of sex trafficking and sexual servitude.

2.2.3 Repatriation

Many of the victims, after a period of rehabilitation, have opted to return to their home country. Of the twenty-five foreign nationals identified as victims of human trafficking between 2013 and 2016, only two remain under the care of the CTU. The International Organization for Migration assisted in financing the repatriation of the victims and continued to support the victims in their home country.

3. PROSECUTION

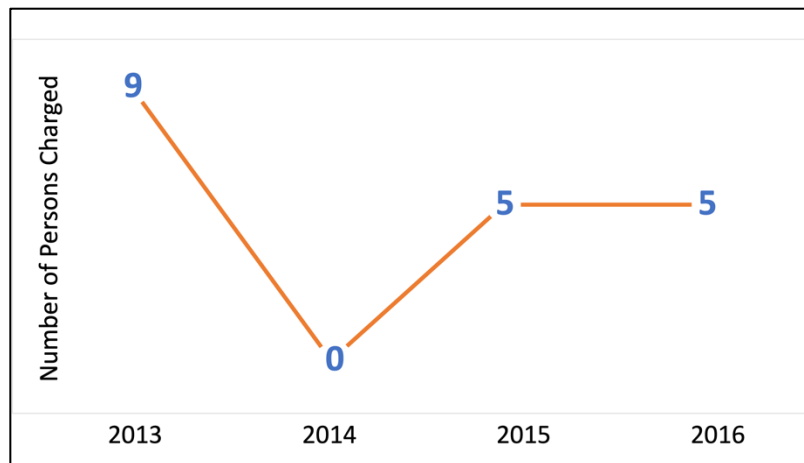
Human trafficking is fueled by a demand for cheap labor, services, and commercial sex, and human traffickers are those who employ force, fraud, or coercion to victimize others in their desire to profit from the existing demand. The CTU received eighty-nine (89) reports of suspected cases of human trafficking in 2016 and investigations initiated into fifty-five (55) of the reports which were deemed to be credible. Thirty-one (31) people were detained for questioning and further inquiries into sixteen possible cases of trafficking.

3.1 Persons Charged for Trafficking in Persons and related Offences

By the end of 2016, charges were laid against five persons for trafficking and related sexual assault, involving three of the five victims. The accused included Keston Pollard and Eddison Gonzales, two adult men, charged with trafficking and sexual assault against one male minor; Anthony Smith, an adult male, charged with trafficking and sexual assault against the female minor; and Nigel Ramai, an adult male, and his wife Reanna Meetoo, charged with trafficking and sexual assault against a female victim. All appeared in court, and their matters were adjourned.

The five accused in 2016, brought the total number of persons charged for Trafficking in Persons and related offences to nineteen (19) since the enactment of the TIP Act in 2013: nine (9) in 2013, zero in 2014, five (5) in 2015 and five (5) in 2016.

Chart 6: Number of Persons Charged (2013- 2016)



3.2 Status of the court matters (2013-2015)

Five of the nine accused in the 2013 matters were committed to stand trial in the High Court in 2016, the others remain at the preliminary inquiry stage in the Magistrate's Court. None of the nineteen matters have been concluded.

3.3 Charges Laid Against the Accused

While the Trafficking in Persons Act is the main legislation to charge perpetrators for the crime of trafficking in persons and trafficking in children, the offences committed against the victims may constitute a breach of other pieces of legislation including the Sexual Offences Act Chapter 11:28 and the Offences Against the Person Act Chapter 11:08. The nature of the charges proffered against the accused are set out as follows:

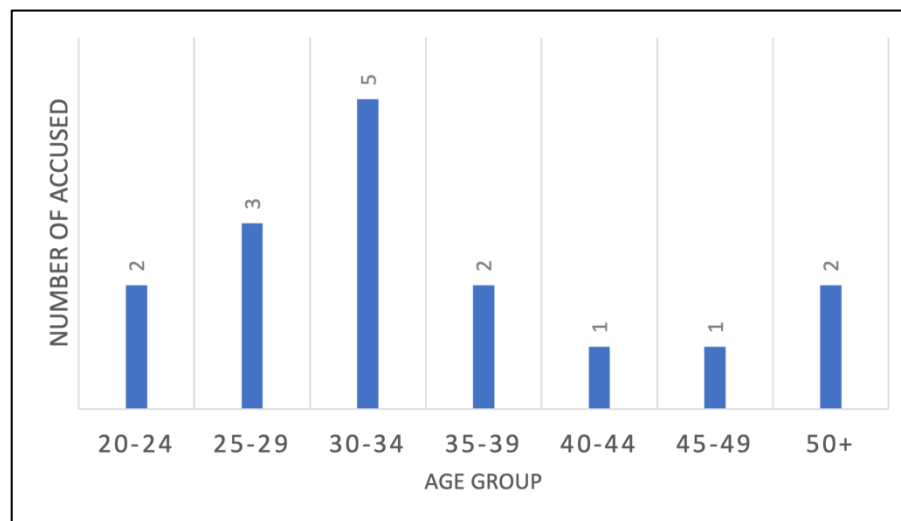
Table 5: Charges Proffered

CHARGE	LEGISLATION AND SECTION
Harbouring for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 16
Receiving for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 17
Transporting for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 16
Common assault	Offences Against the Persons Act Section 30
Sexual intercourse with a minor	
Sexual intercourse with a female without consent	Sexual Offences Act (as amended) section 4
Sexual Penetration	Sexual Offences Act (as amended) section 19
Grievous sexual assault	Sexual Offences Act (as amended) Section 4A
Assault of virtual complainant	Trafficking in Persons Act section 16
Recruiting a minor for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 18
Assisting in managing a brothel	Sexual Offences Act (as amended) Section 22
Keeping a brothel	Sexual Offences Act (as amended) Section 22
Rape and indecent assault	Sexual Offences Act (as amended)

3.4 Age and Nationality of Accused

All nineteen (19) accused traffickers were citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, with three (3) of them being female traffickers. Their ages ranged from twenty (20) to fifty (50) years old.

Chart 7: Age of Accused



4. PARTNERSHIPS

Cooperation among and between governmental, non-governmental, regional, and international organizations was imperative in advancing the fight against human trafficking. In 2016 the CTU continued to partner with local organizations such as the Witness and Support Unit of the TTPS, and the Children's Ark for the launch of the Anti-Child Trafficking Campaign and raise awareness of the crime.

International organizations such as the International Organization for Migration continued to be a key alliance providing accommodation and care packages for victims and conducting training and sensitization sessions to governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Given the number of victims from Colombia and Venezuela, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) were drafted between Trinidad and Tobago and both Colombia and Venezuela. These MOUs aimed to formalize and strengthen collaboration and cooperation between the governments in the fight against human trafficking. However, as at the end of 2016, the MOUs were still under consideration between the relevant countries.

The US government continued its partnership with government agencies, including the CTU and non-governmental organizations by way of training opportunities and support for the assistance of victims, all in an effort to help the country eliminate human trafficking and other related offences.

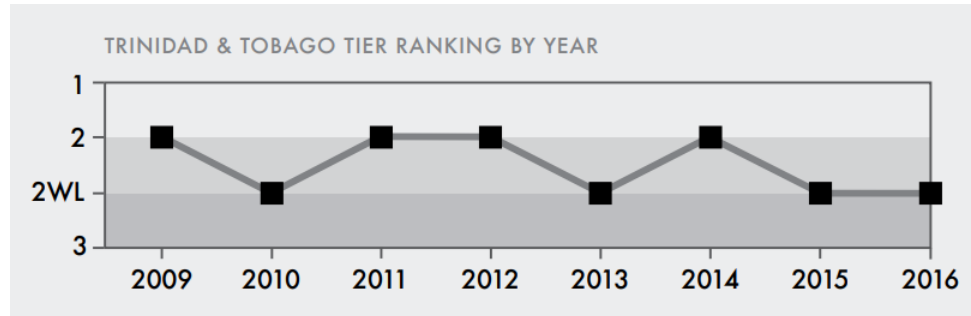
4.1 The US Department of State Annual Trafficking in Persons Report

The Trafficking in Persons Report, or the TIP Report, is an annual report issued since 2001 by the U.S. State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (USDOS TIP Office). The USDOS TIP Office assesses countries' perceived efforts to acknowledge and combat human trafficking during the period April to March and ranks governments based on their findings. The report places countries into tiers based on their compliance with standards outlined in the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA). These tiers are:

Tier 1:	Countries whose governments fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards
Tier 2:	Countries whose governments do not fully comply with all of TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.
Tier 2 Watchlist:	<p>Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing; or ▪ There is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year; or ▪ The determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year.
Tier 3:	Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

Trinidad and Tobago first appeared in the USDOS TIP Report in 2009 with a Tier 2 rating, since then the country has wavered in ranking between Tier 2 and Tier 2 Watch List. In 2016 Trinidad and Tobago was ranked as Tier 2 Watchlist for a second consecutive year. The following chart shows Trinidad and Tobago's Tier ranking from 2009 to 2016.

Chart 8: USDOS TIP Report Trinidad and Tobago Tier Ranking



Source: USDOS TIP Report 2016

The 2016 report was based on a country assessment carried out from April 2015 to March 2016 and published in June 2016. The report noted that *'Women and girls from the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Venezuela, and Colombia are subjected to sex trafficking in brothels and clubs, often lured by offers of legitimate employment, with young women from Venezuela especially vulnerable'*. This statement is supported by the data on trafficked victims in Trinidad and Tobago from 2013 to 2016 and highlighted in Section 2 of this report. The Report went on to state that *'the Government of Trinidad and Tobago does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so'*, however, *'despite these measures, the government did not demonstrate overall increasing anti-trafficking efforts compared to the previous reporting period'*.

The TIP Report suggested the following recommendations for Trinidad and Tobago to improve the country's response to human trafficking and thereby improve the ranking in the USDOS TIP Report:

- investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, including complicit immigration and law enforcement officials;
- develop specialized services for victims in collaboration with NGOs, and ensure adequate funding for robust services;
- implement procedures to guide front-line officials in the identification and referral of potential sex and labor trafficking victims, especially among foreign women in prostitution, migrant workers, and children; train law enforcement and prosecutors in proactively identifying, obtaining, preserving, and corroborating evidence to reduce dependence on victim testimony;
- further expand training and outreach to educate officials about the manifestations of trafficking in the country to aid in the effective investigation of sex and labor cases and prosecution and conviction of traffickers;
- raise public awareness, especially among the migrant population, about forced labor;
- continue implementing the national action plan.

CONCLUSION

Trinidad and Tobago continued to combat trafficking in persons through increased public awareness initiatives and sensitization sessions, availability of the CTU Hotline and a social media presence. Investigations into suspected cases of human trafficking were conducted and several persons screened and identified as victims of trafficking. The discovery of two minors trafficked for sexual exploitation marked a new development and public sensitization to child trafficking was amplified. Despite the challenges of accommodation, the CTU and the Children's Authority implemented measures to care for the child victims and with the best interests of the children as a key focus. The alleged perpetrators of the crimes were arrested and charged. Five accused in previous human trafficking related offences were committed to stand trial at the High Court.

The government of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to implementing measures to eliminate all forms of human trafficking in this country.