



THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ANNUAL REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (2017)

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 2017.

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The Annual Report on Trafficking in Persons in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago serves to provide insight into the depth and scale of human trafficking in this country. It presents data to improve our understanding of human trafficking and shows trends for policy development and operational planning and improvement.

INTRODUCTION

Trafficking in persons is a form of transnational organized crime, that involves the deception and dehumanization of hundreds of thousands of victims across the globe. Every region of the world is affected by human trafficking with migrants being the most detected victims of trafficking in persons. Migrants move from one country to another in search of the dream of a better life with greater job opportunities, better schools, political stability, safety, or simply a new life in a new environment. Criminals exploit that human desire to improve one's life circumstances, deceiving unsuspecting victims with false promises, and generating vast profits from their exploitation.

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish the Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000), referred to as the TIP Protocol, provided the first internationally accepted definition of trafficking in persons. Article 3, paragraph (a) of the TIP 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."

The TIP Protocol sets out a '3-P' framework of Prevention, Protection and Prosecution to enable countries to formulate a counter trafficking response that addresses all aspects of human trafficking. Prevention requires the use of public education and sensitization initiatives to prevent persons from falling prey to human trafficking. Protection involves identifying actual and potential victims of trafficking and providing suitable and adequate support for them. Prosecution concerns prosecuting and convicting individuals and criminal groups perpetrating the crime of trafficking in persons. A fourth 'P' of Partnership which includes forging local and international partnerships to aid in combating human trafficking was added to the framework as it was widely recognized that no country can deal with trafficking in persons on its own and that the transnational nature of the crime requires the collaboration of multiple local and international organizations.

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 supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime on 9th September 2001, and ratified the Protocol on 6th November 2007. The Trafficking in Persons Act Chapter 12:10 of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago, designed to give effect to the TIP Protocol was proclaimed 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. In 2017, increasing numbers of Venezuelan nationals began to flee the economic and political situation in Venezuela, with hundreds entering Trinidad and Tobago illegally in search of work; many started claiming asylum with the Living Waters Community, the local partner of the UNHCR. This introduced the rise of three phenomena in this country: human smuggling networks, mass migration, and asylum in the context of the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees.

Simultaneously, the demand within the country for commercial sex appeared to have become more pronounced as anecdotes from migrant women detained and interviewed, suggest that the sale of sexual services expanded from the traditional 'brothel' to massage parlours, private houses, hotels and 'rooms for sex' at bars. It was observed in the 2016 Annual Report that eighty-five percent (85%) of all the victims identified in Trinidad and Tobago were sexually exploited mainly for forced prostitution. This demand for commercial sex can be directly linked to the sexual exploitation of women and girls as twenty-six of the identified victims of sex trafficking for the period 2013-2017 were female. Also of note in the 2016 Annual Report was that ninety-seven percent (97%) of the identified victims were foreign nationals mainly from Venezuela.

Responding to Trafficking in Persons

On 11th January 2013, the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) was established under the Ministry of National Security in accordance with Section 11 of the Act, to investigate cases of trafficking in persons, identify, and assist victims, prosecute offenders, and raise awareness among the populace about the crime. Since then, the CTU has rescued and assisted thirty-two (32) victims of trafficking, twenty (20) persons have been charged for trafficking in persons and related offences under the TIP Act and numerous awareness campaigns conducted to sensitize the public about the phenomenon.

The National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NTFATIP) comprising Ministers responsible for foreign affairs, labour, social development, national security, justice, and education was established in July 2014 in accordance with Sections 5 and 7 of the TIP Act to direct the strategic counter trafficking response of the country. Under the stewardship of the NTFATIP, a National Plan of Action to address the varying issues associated with trafficking in persons was drafted and sent to key stakeholders for comment.

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 2017 report examines the counter trafficking response of the country under the '4-P' framework of 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

Outreach, or public engagement, is key to the prevention of human trafficking. Strategies include the use of awareness campaigns, seminars, workshops, and presentations to educate the national community about the crime of trafficking, how it affects the population and the deception tactics employed by the traffickers to enslave individuals. Prevention necessitates a national plan of action that outlines the measures to be taken to prevent trafficking in persons, protect victims, prosecute offenders and work in partnership with domestic and international partners. Implementing the plan requires well-trained staff who can recognize indicators of trafficking, positively identify victims, provide the required assistance to victims and disrupt the operations of the traffickers.

1.1 National Plan of Action

The National Plan of Action (NPA) drafted by the National Steering Committee of Permanent Secretaries of stakeholder Ministries in 2016, was approved for implementation at the end of 2017. The NPA included measures for the prevention of trafficking in persons and trafficking of children, the identification of, assistance to and protection of victims, the prosecution of traffickers and partnerships and collaboration.

1.2 Public Outreach

The CTU continued its campaign to raise awareness of trafficking in persons within the general public, governmental organizations and private businesses, as well as increase the capability among the staff. The following activities took place in 2017:

The Ministry of National Security contracted the company Lexo TV to work with the Counter Trafficking Unit to produce four sixty-second video PSAs on different forms of human trafficking at a cost of \$480,000. These PSAs were distributed to three media houses- CNC3, CCN TV6 and CNMG, for airing during prime time at a cost of \$320,000.00.

The CTU collaborated with the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (AATT) to display signage and posters about human trafficking at the Piarco International Airport to alert the travelling public about human trafficking. At the same time sensitization training on human trafficking was conducted with personnel from different organizations operating within the airport compound.

A Puppet Show using life-sized puppets aimed at making children aware of human trafficking was created through a collaboration between the CTU, the Victim Witness and Support Unit of the TTPS, the Children's Ark, and Caribbean Kids and Family Therapy Organization, and performed at the following venues:

Venue	# of Shows	# Persons in Attendance
Success Laventille RC Primary School	1	800
NALIS POS	3	100
Monte Cristo Park, Sangre Grande (Fair)	1	100
Roxanne's Children Christmas Event	1	120

The CTU continued to use the movie 'Trafficked' which was funded in part by the CTU, as an awareness tool. The movie was aired at the Iere High School in Princes Town to approximately 580 students following which a discussion on human trafficking ensued.

The CTU participated in several events organized by NGOs, hosting booths at the event venues to disseminate information about human trafficking. These included:

- The A21 Walk for Freedom
- The First Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago Children's Rally
- International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Public Education and Information Fair at City Gate, Port of Spain
- Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Career Fair

1.3 Sensitization Campaigns

Sensitization sessions were conducted during 2017 to public and private organizations listed in Table 1. Twenty-one (21) training sessions were delivered to one thousand two hundred and thirty (1230) participants.

Table 1: Training and Sensitization Sessions to the Public

Organization	# Sensitization Sessions	Number of Participants
Bon Air High School	1	60
Mt. D'Or SDA Church	1	150
Family Life, Tobago	1	21
Quota International Region 10 Meeting	1	50
Neal & Massy Company	1	30
Faith and Victory Center Crime Prevention Community Initiative	1	100
Salvation Army T&T Women's Ministry	1	80
Vessigny Secondary School	1	200
Airport Authority of T&T	3	77
Voice of Triumph Ministries	1	200
Stanmore Avenue SDA Church	1	100
IOM TIP Training for Prosecutors	1	26
IOM TIP Training for Immigration Officers	1	25
IOM TIP Training for Judges and Magistrates	1	16
Work Permit Committee	1	10
TTDF Command Group	1	20
Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard	1	30
SDA Church Tobago	1	25
Labour Inspectorate	1	10
Total	21	1230

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 takes tips about potential situations involving all forms of trafficking in persons and facilitates the launch of an investigation by law enforcement officers. Through the hotline the operations of the traffickers can be rapidly disrupted, and assistance rendered to individuals in crisis. The Counter Trafficking Unit received forty-seven (47) reports of suspected trafficking in 2017 through the hotline compared to twenty-three (23) reports in 2016.

1.5 Social Media

The use of social media networks is the main avenue through which people interact in today's world. The online arena has created new ways for traffickers to identify, contact and entrap victims in exploitative schemes. To keep pace with emerging online platforms, the CTU created and maintains a social media presence on the following 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

Through these accounts, information about human trafficking as well as activities of the CTU are disseminated to the public and members of the public can interact with the Unit to comment, ask questions or make a report.

1.6 Staff Training

In September 2017, nine of the police officers were transferred out of the CTU because of internal challenges. Three new officers were assigned and received orientation training in trafficking in persons from key stakeholder agencies to enable them to understand and perform their duties at the CTU. Training was offered by INTERPOL as part of a two-year project to build capacity among law enforcement within the region. The Embassy of Colombia continued its Spanish Language training for Public Officials. Table 2 details the training offered to staff:

Table 2: Capacity Building of Staff

Training Organization	Course	Staff in Attendance
Embassy of Colombia	Spanish Language Training for Public Officers	1 Director
		4 Police Officers
INTERPOL	Investigative Train the Trainer	1 Director
		1 Woman Police Corporal
		1 Immigration Officer
REDTRAC (Jamaica)	Trafficking in Persons	1 Woman Police Corporal

2. PROTECTION

Protection efforts include rescue, recognition, rehabilitation, and reintegration. It starts with identifying actual and potential victims of trafficking then providing suitable and adequate support for them. In determining if a case is one of trafficking in persons, investigators must examine if the situation experienced by the individual meets the definition of trafficking in persons. The definition of human trafficking presents three key elements, which must all be present to definitively identify a victim:

1. The **Action** which includes the recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining of an individual.
2. The **Means** through which the action takes place including force, fraud, deception, or coercion.
3. The specific **Purpose** of exploitation such as forced labor or services or commercial sex act(s) or sexual servitude.

In cases involving children under the age of eighteen (18) it is not necessary to demonstrate force, fraud, deception or coercion (the means).

2.1 Investigations, Screening, and Identification of victims

The CTU received seventy-two (72) reports of suspected cases of human trafficking from sources including the Immigration Division, Police Stations, confidential informants, NGOs and the CTU hotline. Thirty-two (32) exercises were conducted throughout the country based on the reports and nineteen (19) further investigations were initiated. During the exercises carried out across the country, one hundred and five (105) persons were found in potentially exploitative situations.

Following a preliminary assessment for indicators of human trafficking, thirty-six (36) of persons were identified for further in-depth screening to determine if they were victims of the crime. The in-depth examination resulted in fifteen (15) people being identified as potential victims. The nationality, gender and suspected exploitation of the potential victims are highlighted in Table 3:

Table 3: Potential Victims by Nationality, Gender and Type of Exploitation (2017)

Country of Nationality	# Male	Type of Exploitation	# Female	Type of Exploitation
Bolivia	1	Forced Labour	-	-
Trinidad and Tobago	-	-	1	Sexual
Venezuela	1	Forced Labour	12	Sexual
Total	2		13	

2.1.1 Identified Victims (2017)

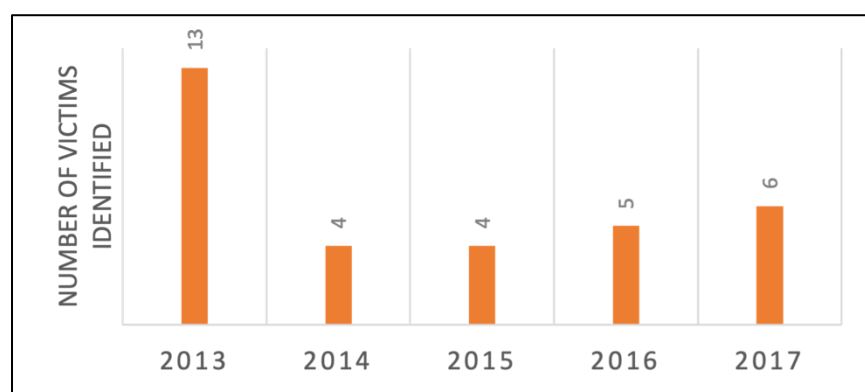
Subsequent enquiries by investigators to corroborate the statements of the suspected victims, found that six (6) persons did not meet the threshold to be classified as victims, three (3) were deemed inconclusive as there was insufficient corroborating evidence and six (6) were positively identified as victims of trafficking. As shown in Table 4, five (5) of the victims were females from Venezuela trafficked for sexual exploitation, one a minor at time of rescue, while the sixth victim was the male Bolivian national trafficked for forced labour.

Table 4: Identified Victims (2017) by Nationality, Gender, Age and Type of Exploitation

Nationality	Gender	Age at Time of Rescue	Type of exploitation
Venezuela	F	17	Sexual/ Forced prostitution
Venezuela	F	21	Sexual/ Forced prostitution
Venezuela	F	23	Sexual/ Forced prostitution
Venezuela	F	26	Sexual/ Forced prostitution
Venezuela	F	27	Sexual/ Forced prostitution
Bolivia	M	31	Forced Labour

2.1.2 Victims identified between 2013-2017

The six (6) victims identified in 2017 brought the total number of victims identified since the proclamation of the TIP Act to thirty-two (32): thirteen (13) in 2013, four (4) in 2014, four (4) in 2015 and five (5) in 2016.

Chart 1: Number of Identified Victims of Trafficking from (2013-2017)

2.1.3 Victim Profile

The information gleaned from the victims during the interview and subsequent corroboration by the investigators provided a window into the operations of the traffickers. Traffickers target persons with vulnerabilities and falsely offer them an ‘opportunity’ that supposedly would lead to a better life. The traffickers in the destination country make the arrangements to transport, harbour and exploit the unsuspecting victim.

2.1.4 The Act: Targeting, Recruiting and Transporting Victims

In every case, the victim was experiencing economic hardship and was recruited through ‘word of mouth’ by people known to them. The jobs offered were bartender, modelling for promotions, and property maintenance; the supposed salary ranged from US\$800-\$2000. The victims, convinced that the job opportunities were legitimate, decided to travel to this country to improve their circumstances. The traffickers in Trinidad made the travel arrangements communicating with the victims via WhatsApp. In some cases, the trafficker sent information to them about their ‘company’, paid for their tickets to Trinidad and sent money to them to pay for other travel-related expenses. Once in Trinidad the cost of the ticket and the money that was advanced to them was used to force the victim into a situation of debt bondage.

2.1.5 The Means: Control Methods

When the victims arrived in the country, the traffickers took them to a house or apartment, locked them in a room and took away their passports and phones. The traffickers told them they had to repay the cost of the air/boat tickets and the money would be deducted from their 'salary'. In the case of the female victims, they were told they had to prostitute to repay the debt.

... they had to prostitute to repay the debt.

The victims suffered intimidation, threats, harassment, violence, and, in the case of the female victims, sexual abuse; all these were strategies used by the traffickers to break the victims' will to escape, seek help or report the exploiter. The female victims were forced into prostitution and sold several times a day by the traffickers, to paying 'clients' for sex. The victims stated that they were threatened by 'men with guns' and told that the police and immigration 'wanted to lock them up'. The trafficker told them he 'was their boss' and as such they had to do anything he wanted. The male victim was forced to work long hours without rest and little food.

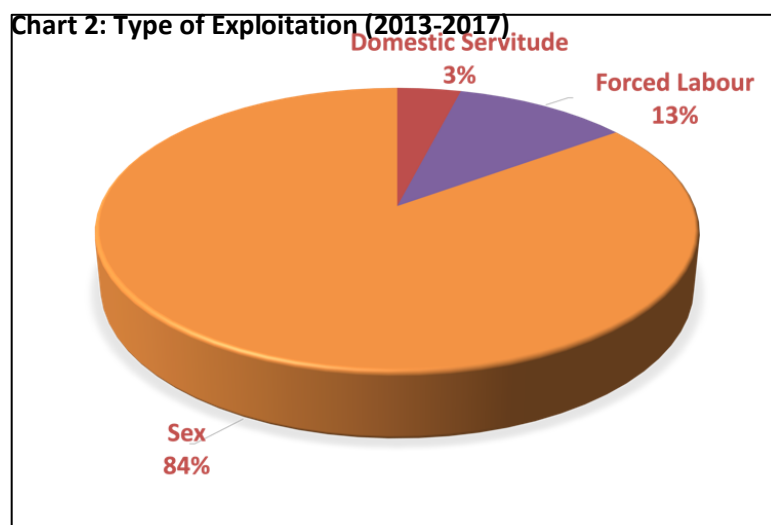
... they were threatened by 'men with guns.'

The female victims stated that they were taken by their traffickers to various hotels, apartments, massage parlours and private homes where they were compelled to perform sex acts. The traffickers controlled how many 'clients' they had to service, the length of time for each paid sexual encounter 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 and felt helpless.

2.1.6 The Purpose: Exploitation

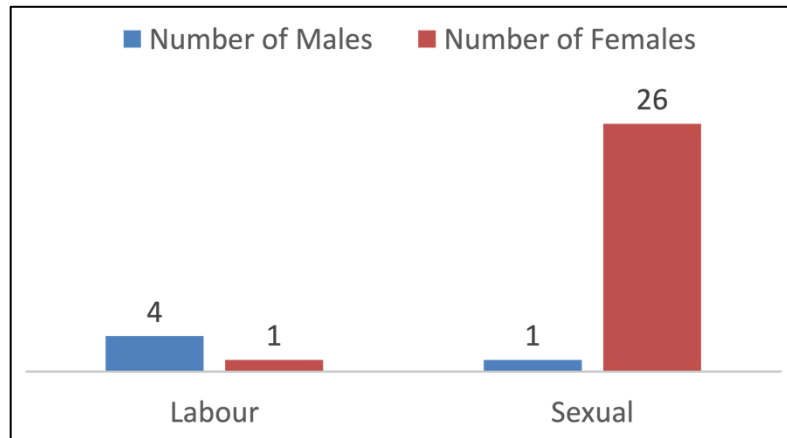
The purpose of trafficking a person is always the exploitation of the victim in some form, for the financial or other benefit of the trafficker. The five female victims were all trafficked for sexual exploitation, mainly forced prostitution, while the male victim was trafficked for forced labour.

The trend of victims, mainly female, being trafficked for sexual exploitation and males for forced labour continued in 2017. Over the period 2013-2017 twenty-seven (27) of thirty-two (32) identified victims, were subjected to sexual exploitation- one male and twenty-six females, and five (5) to forced labour- four (4) males and one female in a case of domestic servitude.



Women have been the most vulnerable to trafficking as twenty-seven (27) of the thirty-two (32) victims were female—twenty-six (26) to sex trafficking and one to forced labour in the form of domestic servitude.

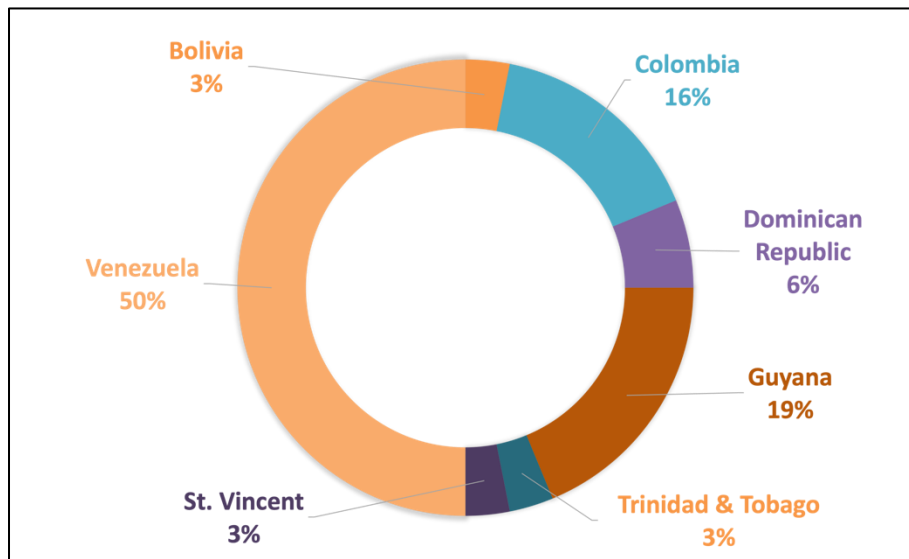
Chart 3: Type of Exploitation by Gender (2013-2017)



2.1.7 Nationality of Victims

The victims identified in 2017 were migrants from Bolivia and Venezuela. It is well observed that for the period 2013 to 2017 most of all victims of human trafficking identified in Trinidad and Tobago were Venezuelan nationals, shown in Chart 4.

Chart 4: Nationality of Victims



An examination of the nationality, gender and type of exploitation of the victims from 2013 to 2017 show that Latin American females have predominantly been trafficked to this country for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

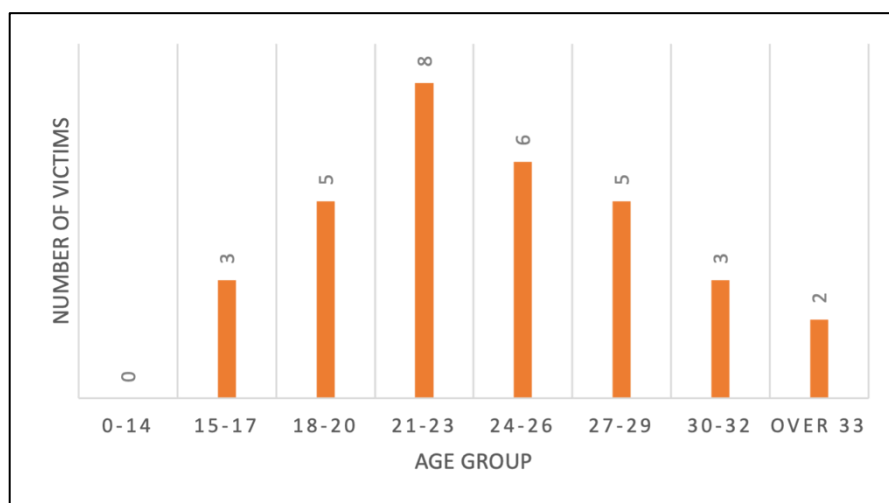
Table 5: Total Number of Victims by Nationality, Gender and Type of Exploitation (2013-2017)

Country of Nationality	# Male	Type of Exploitation	# Female	Type of Exploitation
Bolivia	1	Forced Labour	-	-
Colombia	0		5	Domestic Servitude (1) Sex Trafficking (4)
Dominican Republic	0	-	2	Sex Trafficking
Guyana	4	Forced Labour	2	Sex Trafficking
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1	Sex Trafficking	0	-
Trinidad and Tobago			1	Sex Trafficking
Venezuela	0	-	16	Sex Trafficking
Total	6		26	

2.1.8 Age of Victims

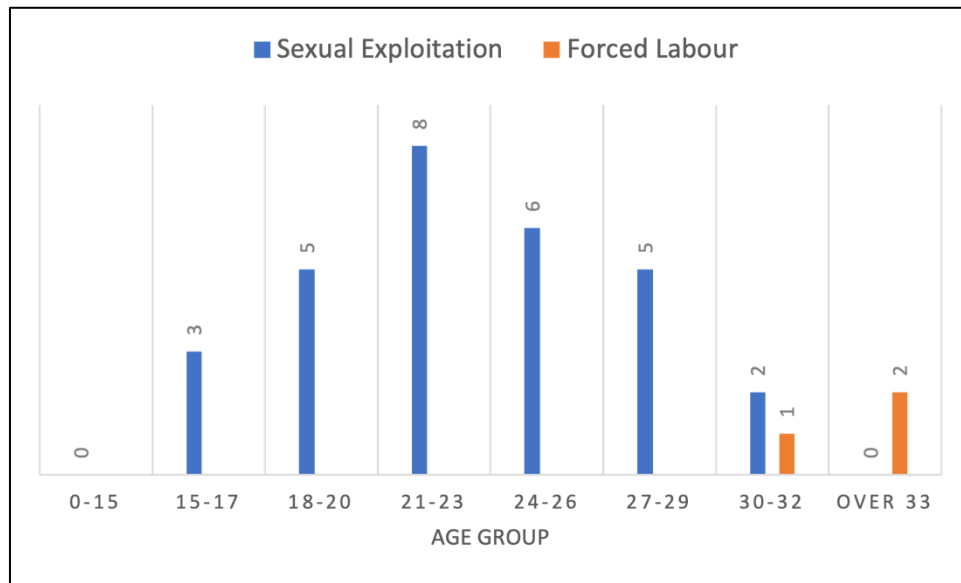
The age of the victims identified in 2017 ranged from seventeen (17) to thirty-one (31) years old. The male victim from Bolivia was aged thirty-one (31) while one Venezuelan female was a minor aged seventeen (17). This age group is consistent with international findings that traffickers target young adults. Over the period 2013 to 2017 all but five victims were under the age of thirty, shown in Chart 5.

Chart 5: Age of Victims (2013-2017)



Globally, it has been recognized that young adults and children are particularly vulnerable to sex trafficking. The data suggests that this trend is evident in Trinidad and Tobago as twenty-seven of the thirty-two victims identified over the period 2013 to 2017 were aged between fifteen (15) and twenty-nine (29) and subjected to sexual exploitation, shown in Chart 6.

Chart 6: Exploitation by Age Group



2.2 Assistance

Key victim protection efforts include rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration. Rehabilitation efforts help provide emergency assistance and services; effective placement in stable, long-term situations; and access to educational, vocational, and economic opportunities. Reintegration efforts include voluntary repatriation for trafficking victims and assistance in their home communities. Several key stakeholder organizations provide support to the victims from medical and mental health support to housing and daily supplies.

The CTU continued to provide accommodation at a women's hostel for two victims and engaged other private shelters to temporarily house potential victims. The Unit supported victims with groceries and personal supplies when necessary and assisted victims in communicating with their families.

The International Organization for Migration, under a regional project to support to victims of human trafficking, provided funding to assist victims with longer term housing, food and other personal supplies.

The Gender and Child Affairs (GCA) Division of the Office of the Prime Minister secured a building in South Trinidad to house victims of human trafficking and domestic violence and was carrying out repairs to make the property fit for use. A second building was acquired to accommodate counsellors, social workers, and psychiatrists to be able to treat victims in a safe, conducive space.

The Family Planning Association provided sexual and reproductive support along with the Queen's Park Counselling Centre & Clinic which provided clinical health care and counselling to the victims.

Several churches offered bilingual church services while non-governmental organizations such as TTVSOLNET, Childline and Families in Action provided bilingual counselling and independent living support to the victims.

The Consular representatives of the victims take an active interest in the rehabilitation of the victims, providing documents to confirm the identity of the victim, communicating with their families, and coordinating their repatriation to their home country. Most victims after a period of recuperation have opted to return to their home country and the support of their family.

3. PROSECUTION

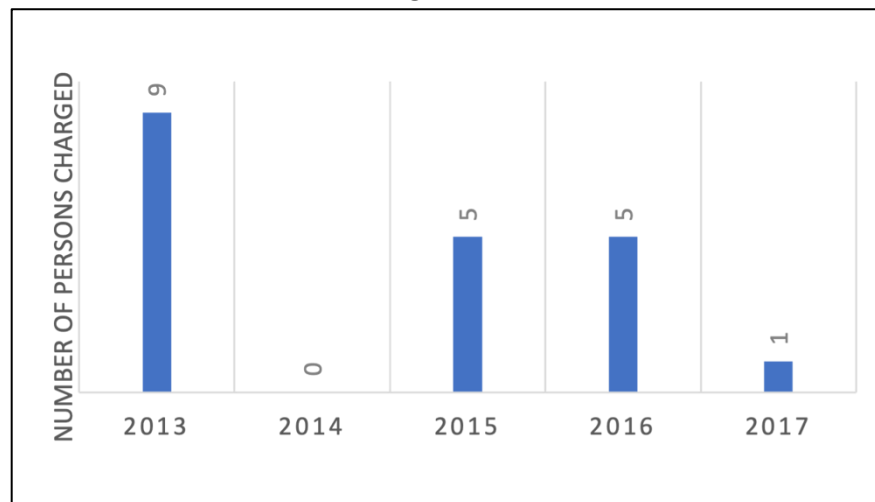
The CTU carried out thirty-two (32) exercises across the country and detained fifty (50) persons for questioning and further inquiries into their possible involvement in human trafficking.

3.1 Persons charged for trafficking in persons and related offences

Following statements by the victims and the collection of corroborating evidence, 30-year-old Lucas Hernandez, a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago was charged for common assault and receiving three females, all Venezuelan nationals, for the purposes of sexual exploitation. He appeared before the Arima Magistrates' Court and the matter was adjourned.

The arraignment of Lucas Hernandez brought the total number of persons charged for trafficking in persons and related offences since the enactment of the TIP Act in 2013 to twenty (20): nine (9) in 2013, five (5) in 2015 and five (5) in 2016.

Chart 7: Number of Persons Charged



Accused Anthony Smith who was charged in 2016 for trafficking a female minor was committed to stand trial at the High Court in June 2017. A total of six accused are now slated to face trial at the High Court. The other fourteen matters remain at the preliminary inquiry stage at the following Magistrate's Courts for the districts where the trafficking in persons offences occurred:

Magistrates' Court

Arima Magistrates' Court

Chaguanas Magistrates' Court

Princes Town Magistrates' Court

San Fernando Magistrates' Court

Siparia Magistrates' Court

Tunapuna

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 in Table 6:

Table 6: 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, Gender and Nationality of Accused

All twenty (20) persons accused of trafficking in persons 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.

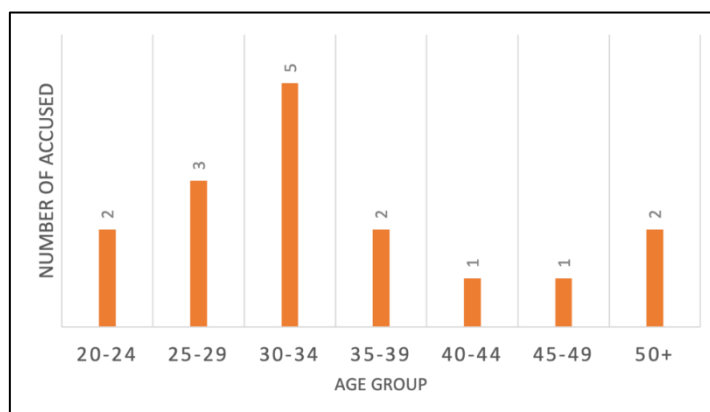


Chart 8: Age of Accused

4. PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships augment efforts by bringing together diverse experience, amplifying messages, and leveraging resources, thereby accomplishing more together than any one entity or sector would be able to alone.

The CTU continued to partner with local and international organizations to provide accommodation and assistance to victims and training opportunities. 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.

Recognizing the need for greater collaboration between governmental agencies, the CTU drafted Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT). At the end of 2017 the MOUs were still under consideration by all parties.

The CTU engaged the NGO Unit of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) to develop a policy for the assistance to and care for victims of human trafficking. An informal committee was formed and met every month during 2017 to develop a policy and victim care manual.

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. It ranks governments based on their perceived efforts to acknowledge and combat human trafficking. 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.

The country assessment covers the period April to March to the following year with the Annual Report published in June.

The USDOS 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report, elevated Trinidad and Tobago to a Tier 2 ranking after two consecutive years at Tier 2 Watchlist. The following chart shows Trinidad and Tobago's Tier ranking from 2010 to 2017.

Chart 9: USDOS TIP Report Trinidad and Tobago Tier Ranking



Source: USDOS TIP Report 2017

The report noted that 'Trinidad and Tobago is a destination, transit, and source country for adults and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor', and 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'. The Report made the following recommendations to increase efforts to eliminate trafficking in persons:

- increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, including complicit government officials;
- train law enforcement and prosecutors in proactively identifying, obtaining, preserving, and corroborating evidence;
- provide adequate funding for robust victim services and anti-trafficking efforts;
- improve coordination and communication between the counter-trafficking unit, relevant agencies, and NGOs; 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;
- improve regulation of private labor recruitment agencies; and
- raise public awareness, especially among the migrant population, about forced labor.

Conclusion

Trinidad and Tobago continued to combat trafficking in persons through increased public awareness initiatives and sensitization sessions, the 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 another minor trafficked for sexual exploitation continued to trouble the authorities. 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.

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