



THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ANNUAL REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (2018)

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 2018.

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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 modern-day form of slavery, involving victims who may be forced, defrauded, deceived, or coerced into various forms of exploitation. It is a crime always committed with the intention to exploit men, women and children who are treated as inexpensive, expendable, and profitable commodities to be used for the financial or other benefit of the human trafficker.

Most detected victims of trafficking in persons are foreigners in the country of detection. Human mobility which has been steadily increasing across the world due to population growth, affordable telecommunication, and enduring economic inequalities has contributed to the rise of human trafficking. People leave their usual place of abode for what they believe is a better life in another city or country, however, this desire to move sometimes creates a vulnerability that human traffickers are eager to exploit.

The intention to exploit is enshrined in the globally accepted definition of trafficking in persons set out in Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (TIP Protocol) supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Article 3 of the Protocol defines trafficking in persons as:

“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 is an international agreement to address the crime of trafficking in persons on a transnational level creating a global language to define trafficking in persons, assist victims of trafficking and prevent trafficking in persons. The 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 the phenomenon and acknowledges the internationally recognized human rights of the victim. The Protocol also establishes the parameters of judicial cooperation and exchanges of information among countries. Given that trafficking in persons is a transnational organized crime, no country can deal with trafficking in persons on its own.

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 on 9th September 2001 and ratified the Protocol on 6th November 2007. The Trafficking in Persons Act which was created to give effect to the Protocol, was 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. Regional and extra-regional migrants have been coming to Trinidad and Tobago for many years seeking economic opportunities and safety; however, many of them are in irregular immigration status or came to the country through irregular means which increases their vulnerability to exploitation.

The demand within the country for commercial sex and cheap labour has fueled the exploitation of persons well observed in the numbers of victims officially identified since the enactment of the legislation in 2013. Based on data from previous years, more than ninety (90%) percent of all detected victims in Trinidad and Tobago were foreign nationals and eighty-two (82%) percent of those trafficked were for the purpose of sexual exploitation, mainly forced prostitution and sexual servitude.

Responding to Trafficking in Persons

The Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) of the Ministry of National Security, established on 11th January 2013 in compliance with Section 11 of the TIP Act, is the authorized body to investigate cases of trafficking in persons, identify, and assist victims, prosecute offenders, and raise awareness among the populace about the crime.

The National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NTFATIP) was established in July 2014 in accordance with Section 5 of the TIP Act to develop and direct the strategic counter trafficking response of the country. The NTFATIP's mandate includes the establishment of policies, creation of a national plan of action, coordination of the collection and sharing of data among agencies, cooperation with foreign governments and measuring and evaluating the progress of the country in trafficking prevention, protection and assistance to victims and the prosecution and enforcement against traffickers.

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 2018 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

Prevention involves the use of public education and sensitization initiatives to prevent individuals from falling prey to human traffickers. Strategies to educate the public include awareness campaigns through the engagement of the media (press, radio, and television), as well as seminars, workshops, and presentations. It also requires well-trained staff who can recognize indicators of trafficking, identify victims, and disrupt the operations of the traffickers.

1.1 National Plan of Action

The National Plan of Action for the period 2016-2020 was approved by the Cabinet, however its implementation was hampered by changes in staff in several key stakeholder organizations. The plan 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 efforts to raise awareness of trafficking in persons within the public, governmental organizations and private businesses, as well as increase the capability among the staff.

The CTU hosted information booths and participated in community outreach initiatives to promote awareness about human trafficking at the following events:

- Point Fortin Community Outreach
- T&T Transparency Institute Town Hall meeting in Scarborough, Tobago
- Nutrien/ PCS Nitrogen Annual Safety, Health and Environment Week

The locally produced film 'Trafficked', co-sponsored by the CTU, was shown to secondary school students at Naparima Girls' High School and to the public at the Diego Martin Community Center. A second locally produced movie 'Moving Parts' also co-sponsored by the CTU, was launched at the Writers' Center and aired at the at the British High Commissioner's Residence to an audience of diplomats.

The Puppet Show using life-sized puppets to talk about child trafficking, a collaboration between the CTU, the TTPS Victim Witness and Support Unit and the Children's Ark, was performed at Nelson Street Girls RC School, Nelson Street Boys RC School and Bethlehem Boys Primary school. The show was also performed at ten libraries across the country in partnership with NALIS Public Libraries Division, to commemorate the UN World Day Against trafficking in Persons.

Through funding from the US Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking and a collaboration between the IOM and the CTU, brochures in English, Spanish, French and Chinese were produced for distribution to the migrant community to advise victims of their rights. This initiative was aimed at migrants who may be experiencing exploitation, are not aware that they can be helped, and are typically afraid to come forward or say anything for fear of being detained and deported, especially those with irregular immigration status.

In October 2018, the CTU took part in an interview to bring awareness about human trafficking to the viewers of the program 'The Right Fit' shown on the local channel Islamic Broadcasting Network (IBN).

1.3 Sensitization Campaigns

The CTU conducted sensitization sessions to governmental and non- governmental organizations, delivering thirty (30) such sessions to over twelve hundred participants. Table 1 shows the training and sensitization sessions conducted during 2018.

Table 1: Training and Sensitization Sessions to the Public

Organization	# Sensitization Sessions	Number of Participants
TTDF Regiment 1 st Infantry Battalion	3	48
TTPS First Divisional Officers	1	25
TTPS Second Division Officers	1	22
TTPS South Western Division	2	41
TTPS Maloney Police Station	1	31
TTPS Special Branch	1	50
TTPS Police Academy	2	57
Cunupia Police Youth Club	1	80
Youth Training Centre (YTC) and Youth Transformation and Rehabilitation Centre for Girls (YTRCG)	1	67
Airports Authority of T&T	2	50
Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs	1	15
NCRHA	1	15
Barataria Anglican Primary School	1	70
St. Madeleine Anglican Church	1	35
Morne Diablo RC Church	1	100
T&T Hotel and Tourism Association	1	20
Rotary Club of POS	1	20
Rotary Club of Maraval	1	50
Marriott Hotel	1	16
Cara Suites Hotel	1	20
St. Augustine SDA	1	80
Nutrien/ PCS Nitrogen	1	25
Holy Name Convent, POS	1	200
Tacarigua Anglican Church	1	60
Soroptomist International, POS	1	22
Total	30	1219

1.4 CTU Hotline 800-4CTU

In 2018, the Counter Trafficking Unit received fifty-five (55) reports of suspected trafficking through its hotline. 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 disrupted, and assistance rendered to individuals in crisis.

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

There were no formal training programs for the staff at the CTU in 2018. However, they participated in several meetings and workshops in preparation for a Regional Operation dubbed "Operation Libertad" led by INTERPOL and executed over the period April 3rd -5th in the seven participating countries including Trinidad and Tobago. Three CTU staff members were certified by INTERPOL as 'trainers' for the execution of Operation Libertad.

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 Victim Identification (2018)

The CTU received ninety (90) reports of suspected cases of human trafficking in 2018: fifty-five (55) reports were received through the hotline, thirty (30) reports from the Immigration Division, Police Stations, confidential sources, and NGOs, and five (5) reports from intelligence sources. From these reports, thirty-one (31) investigations were initiated, and six (6) exercises conducted by officers attached to the CTU to recover persons suspected of being victims of human trafficking. Seventy-seven (77) persons were retrieved from potentially exploitative situations and screened for indicators of human trafficking resulting in fifteen (15) females, all Venezuelan nationals, deemed as potential victims and placed in protective custody.

2.1.1 Victim Identification (2018)

Applying the 3-element framework to determine a case of human trafficking, and following in-depth screening and inquiries into the statements of the fifteen potential victims, it was determined that two (2) were not cases of human trafficking, four (4) were inconclusive as there was insufficient evidence and those persons chose to leave the country before the investigations were completed, one (1) was a matter involving the unlawful arrangement for the adoption of the woman's minor child, and eight (8) were positively identified as victims of trafficking.

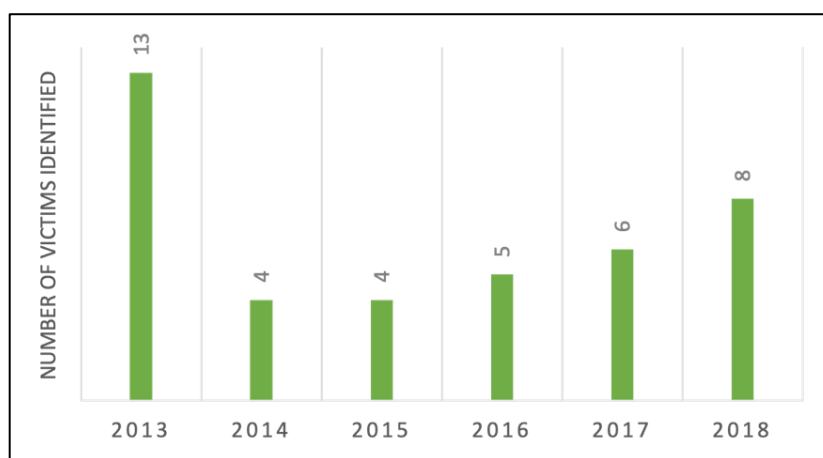
Confirmation of the identity of the verified victims revealed that all were Venezuelan nationals. Five (5) of the victims were minors- one aged fifteen (15) and four aged seventeen (17) with the other three being young adults. Table 2 displays the nationality, gender, age at time of rescue and type of exploitation experienced by the victims.

Table 2: Identified Victims by Nationality, Gender, Age and Type of Exploitation (2018)

Nationality	Gender	Age at Time of Rescue	Type of Exploitation
Venezuela	F	15	Forced prostitution
Venezuela	F	17	Forced prostitution
Venezuela	F	17	Forced prostitution
Venezuela	F	17	Forced prostitution
Venezuela	F	17	Forced Labour
Venezuela	F	21	Forced prostitution
Venezuela	F	22	Forced prostitution
Venezuela	F	22	Forced prostitution

2.1.2 Victims identified between 2013-2018

Since the enactment of the Trafficking in Persons Act, forty (40) persons have been identified as victims of human trafficking. Chart 1 shows the number of victims identified in each year.

Chart 1: Number of Identified Victims (2013-2018)

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 following highlights the experiences of the victims identified in 2018.

2.1.4 The Act: Targeting, Recruiting and Transporting Victims

Recruiters in the source country target persons with vulnerabilities and falsely offer them an ‘opportunity’ that the victim perceives would lead to a better life. The traffickers in the destination country make the arrangements to transport, harbour and exploit the unsuspecting victim.

All victims in 2018 stated that they were experiencing difficult financial and family circumstances. They were recruited through word of mouth by people known to them. In an interesting but concerning event, three (3) of the victims stated that well-dressed men came to their village claiming to be working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Trinidad and told them that because of their circumstances they could be ‘refugees in Trinidad’. The men assured the women that they could ‘help them and their family’ and all their expenses would be taken care of since they were ‘refugees’. The women believing what they were told, left with the men who had planned for them to travel by boat. In the other cases, the traffickers in Trinidad communicated with the victims through WhatsApp and Facebook and made arrangements for them to travel by boat.

2.1.5 The Means: Control Methods

Once the victims arrived in the country, the traffickers took them to their house or apartment, locked them in a room and took away their identification and phones. The traffickers told them they had to repay the cost of transport to Trinidad. In all except one case of the female victims, they were forced into prostitution; one minor was forced into a situation of domestic servitude.

... minor was forced into domestic servitude.

The victims explained that if they did not have sex they would get no food, most times they were fed once per day. They were also told that they would be reported to Immigration and put in jail if they did not comply. In one instance, the victims claimed that the trafficker violently beat his wife in front of them because she had given the girls food, threatening to do the same to them if they did not have sex with his clients. Two of the victims stated that they were beaten and raped when they objected to being prostituted. They were put in a room where there were surveillance cameras to watch their every move. The minor in domestic servitude was forced to work almost eighteen hours every day, got very little food and was abused and monitored all the time by her trafficker.

... The minor was abused and monitored all the time by her trafficker.

One minor was rescued when the vehicle she was being transported in was stopped by police, two managed to escape through a window and sought help and the others were rescued by the police during raids.

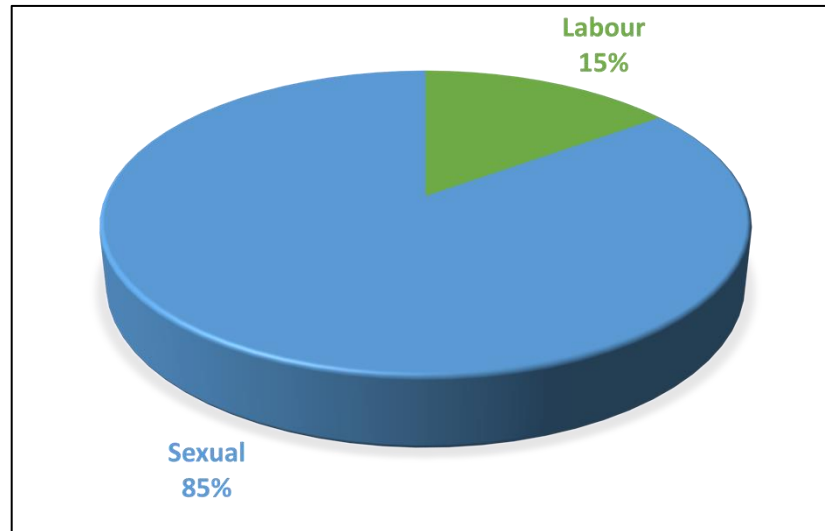
2.1.6 The Purpose: Exploitation

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. Seven of the victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation, mainly forced prostitution, while one victim was trafficked for forced labour in the form of domestic servitude.

2.1.7 Type of Exploitation

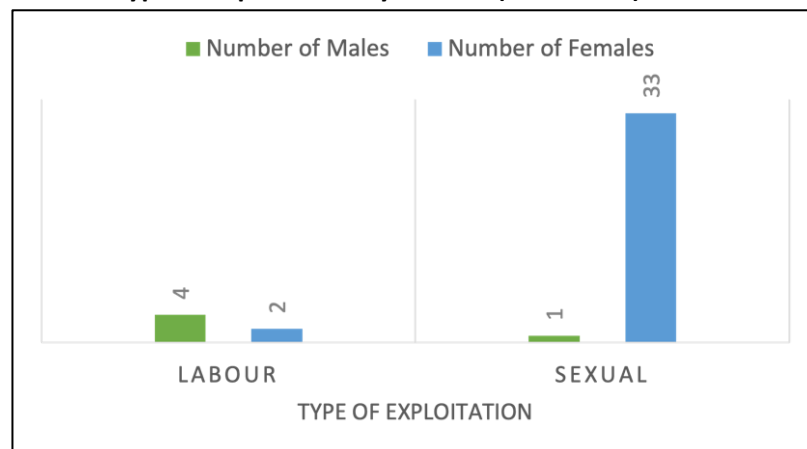
Trafficking for sexual exploitation and for forced labour are the most prominently detected forms of exploitation. The data from 2013 to 2018 shows that eighty-five percent (85%) of all victims were subjected to sex trafficking while fifteen percent (15%) were victims of forced labour including domestic servitude, see Chart 2:

Chart 2: Type of Exploitation



In Trinidad and Tobago, the trend of victims, mainly female, being trafficked for sexual exploitation continued in 2018. Seven (7) of the eight (8) victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation while one was trafficked for forced labour. The increasing sexual exploitation of women and girls signals a steady demand for commercial sex in this country. During the period 2013-2018, thirty-four (34) of the forty (40) identified victims of trafficking were subjected to sexual exploitation (one male and thirty-three (33) females) and six (6) to forced labour (two females and four males). Chart 3 shows the correlation between gender and type of exploitation.

Chart 3: Type of Exploitation by Gender (2013-2018)



2.1.8 Nationality of Victims (2013-2018)

The eight (8) victims identified in 2018 were all female from Venezuela. Female Venezuelan nationals continue to be the most vulnerable to human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago, predominantly for sexual exploitation. The ongoing political and economic upheaval in Venezuela has caused millions of Venezuelan nationals to leave their country in search of work and stability. Many have entered Trinidad and Tobago illegally placing them in highly vulnerable conditions and prone to exploitation.

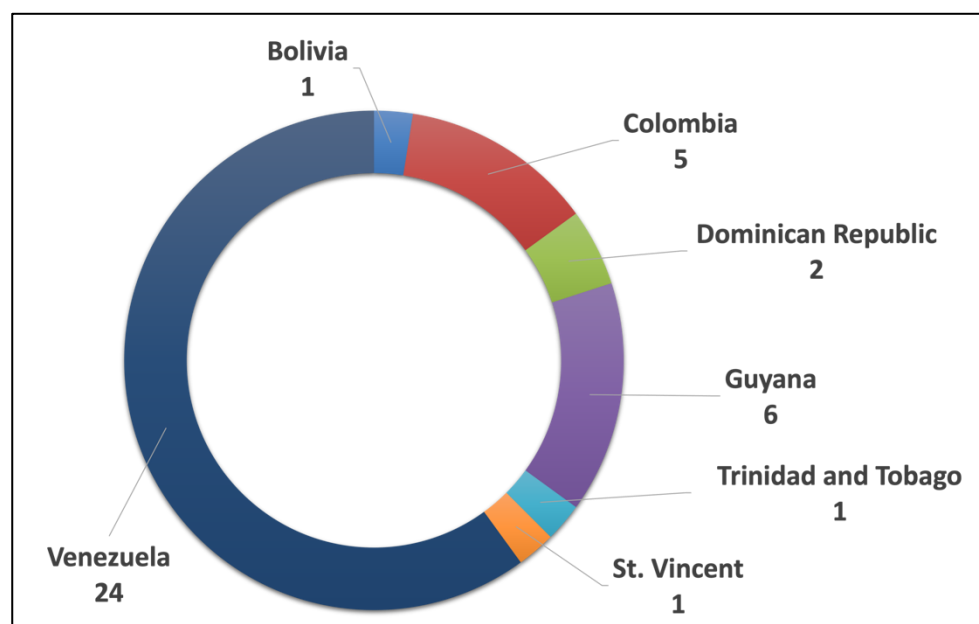
Table 3 displays the source countries for victims of human trafficking detected in Trinidad and Tobago, their gender and type of exploitation. The data shows that females are disproportionately subjected to trafficking in this country.

Table 3: Number of Victims by Nationality, Gender, and Type of Exploitation (2013-2018)

Country of Nationality	# Males	Type of Exploitation	# Females	Type of Exploitation
Bolivia	1	Forced Labour	-	-
Colombia	0	-	1 4	Domestic Servitude Sex Trafficking
Dominican Republic	0	-	2	Sex Trafficking
Guyana	4	Forced Labour	2	Sex Trafficking
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1	Sex Trafficking	-	-
Trinidad and Tobago	-	-	1	Sex Trafficking
Venezuela	0	-	1 23	Forced Labour Sex Trafficking
Total	6		34	

Chart 4 shows the share of victims by nationality clearly indicating that most victims originate from Venezuela.

Chart 4: Number of Victims by Nationality



2.1.9 Age of Victims

The age of the victims identified in 2018 ranged from 15 to 22 years old. One victim was aged fifteen while four were aged seventeen (17). Chart 5 displays the age groups of all identified victims over the period 2013-2018 showing most victims are young people under the age of thirty.

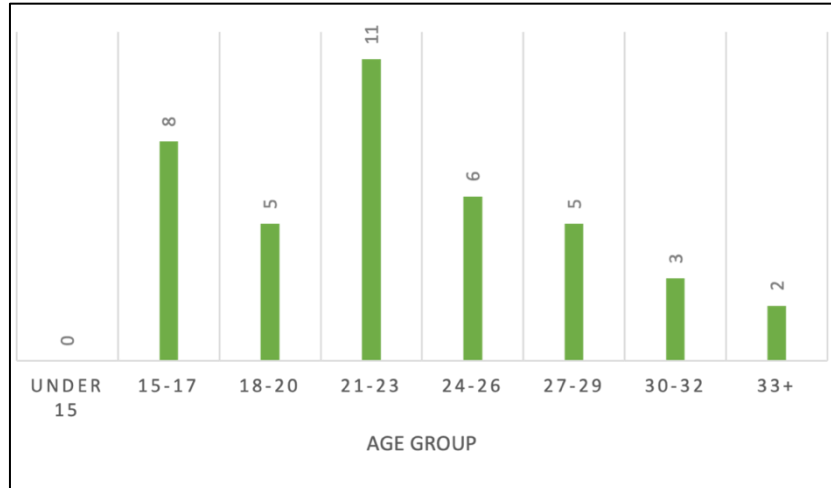


Chart 5: Number of Victims by Age Group for Period 2013-2018

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 lack of suitable accommodation for victims of human trafficking continued to plague the CTU in 2018. As was noted in previous years' report there were no dedicated government-led shelters to house victims of human trafficking. The CTU identified eight (8) victims of trafficking in 2018 and relied on the IOM and the good will and availability of NGO-run shelters for domestic violence victims, to aid the trafficked victims.

With the seeming increase in the number of foreign minors being sexually exploited, challenges emerged in finding appropriate shelter for these victims. The only accommodation available was the Youth Training and Rehabilitation Center and the St. Jude's Home for Girls.

Three shelters for victims of domestic violence assisted in housing the adult victims of human trafficking however there was no formal agreement or arrangement for this assistance. Despite their willingness to assist, the shelters are ill-equipped to deal with victims who are foreign nationals and speak a different language.

The CTU has over the years relied on the assistance provided by the IOM, however the project under which funding was made available to assist victims came to an end in December 2018.

Medical assistance and psychological counselling for victims continued to be provided on a voluntary basis by professionals supporting the shelter residents.

3. PROSECUTION

Prosecuting human traffickers is part of the holistic approach to combating trafficking in persons and delivering justice to the victims. Prosecution involves identifying the perpetrators responsible for committing the crime of trafficking in persons and bringing them to justice. Perpetrators can be men and women, intimate partners, complete strangers to the victims, criminal organizations, business owners, peers, family members, diplomats, farm owners, factory operators, large or small companies, or gangs. Thorough investigation leading to the prosecution and punishment of traffickers provides justice to victims and discourages further trafficking crimes.

The CTU received ninety (90) reports of suspected cases of human trafficking in 2018, investigated thirty-one (31) of the reports and conducted six (6) exercises to recover persons suspected of being victims of human trafficking.

Arising out the investigations charges were proffered against eight (8) persons for human trafficking and other related offences. Two (2) men were charged for sexually exploiting a female minor, and one (1) woman was charged for trafficking a female minor for forced labour. The five (5) other persons, four (4) women and one (1) man, were charged with the unlawful arrangement for adoption of a minor stemming from the investigation into a suspected case of trafficking of a Venezuelan national.

Illegal adoption/ illegal sale of children has not been considered human trafficking/ exploitation under the TIP Act, however it is an offence under the Adoption of Children's Act. Internationally there has been a rise in the sale and illegal intercountry adoption of children. The phenomenon, termed 'child laundering', involves the procurement of a child through payment, deceit, fraud, abduction, or force for the purpose of adoption. Once the children are received by the 'brokers', they are held in sham orphanages while formal adoption processes are used to send them to adoptive parents in another country. According to the UN Office of the Commissioner on Human Rights, "when illegal intercountry adoptions occur, various human rights are violated, including the rights of every child to preserve their identity" and there are "devastating consequences on the lives and rights of victims".

3.1 Number of Persons Charged

Since 2013 the total number of persons charged for trafficking in persons and other related offences stood at twenty-eight (28): nine (9) in 2013, five (5) in 2015, five (5) in 2016, one in 2017 and eight (8) in 2018. Twenty-six (26) persons were citizens of Trinidad and Tobago and two were Venezuelan nationals. Nine (9) of the persons charged were female.

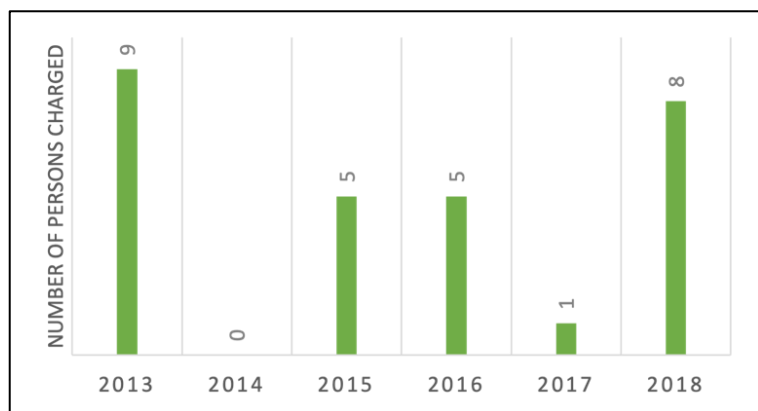


Chart 6: Number of Persons Charged (2013- 2018)

3.2 Status of the Court Matters (2013-2018)

While none of the cases have been concluded in the courts, six accused are slated to face trial at the High Court. Accused, Kedar Ali, charged in 2015 for harbouring for the purpose of exploitation, was killed on 3rd November 2018. The other matters remain at the preliminary inquiry stage in the Magistrate's Court.

3.3 Charges Laid Against the Accused (2013-2018)

While the Trafficking in Persons Act is the main legislation under which charges are proffered for the crime of trafficking in persons and trafficking in children, the offences committed against the victims can 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 charges that have been proffered against the accused over the period 2013 to 2018 are set out in Table 4:

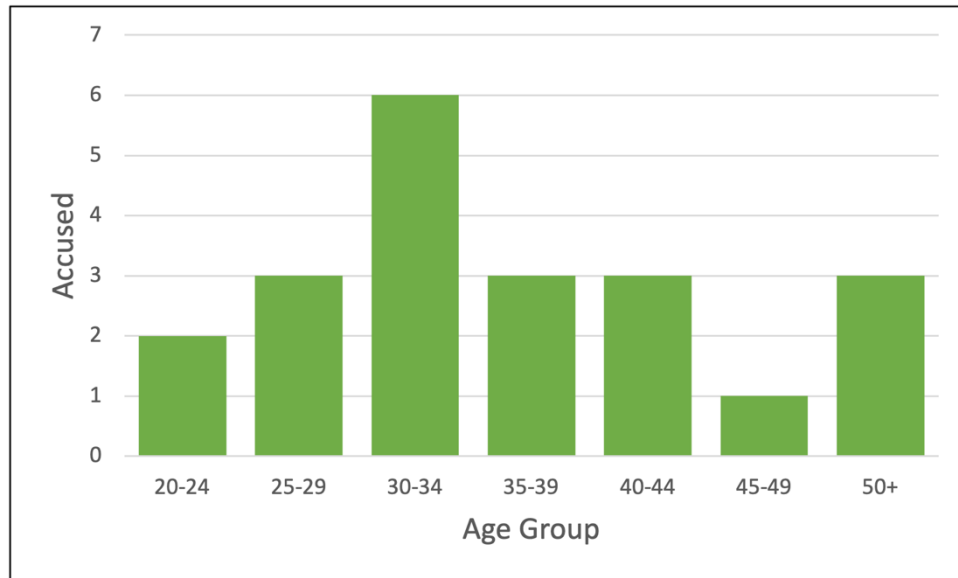
Table 4: Charges Proffered

CHARGE	LEGISLATION AND SECTION
Receiving for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 17
Receiving for the purpose of labour exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 16
Harbouring for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 16
Transporting for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 16
Recruiting a minor for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 18
Receiving a minor for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 18
Receiving a benefit for exploitation of a minor	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 26
Knowingly Receiving a benefit from exploitation of a minor	Trafficking in Persons Act section 26
Sexual Penetration	Sexual Offences Act (as amended) section 19
Sexual intercourse with a female without consent	Sexual Offences Act (as amended) section 4
Sexual intercourse with a minor	
Grievous sexual assault	Sexual Offences Act (as amended) Section 4A
Rape and indecent assault	Sexual Offences Act (as amended)
Common assault	Offences Against the Persons Act Section 30
Assault of virtual complainant	Trafficking in Persons Act section 16
Keeping a brothel	Sexual Offences Act (as amended) Section 22
Assisting in managing a brothel	Sexual Offences Act (as amended) Section 22
Unlawful arrangement for adoption of a minor	Adoption of Children's Act Section 9 (2)

3.4 Age and Nationality of Accused

All the persons accused of trafficking and related offences were citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, with three (3) of them being female. Their ages ranged from twenty (20) to fifty-two (52) years old shown in Chart 7.

Chart 7: Age of Accused



4. PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships at both the local and international level are essential for tackling the inherently complex and often transnational crime that is human trafficking. These relationships help victims receive wide-ranging support and prevent perpetrators from exploiting geographical or national boundaries to avoid punishment. The CTU maintained its relationships with local and international organizations to provide accommodation and assistance to victims, and training opportunities to both victims and staff.

The International Organization for Migration continued to be a key alliance providing accommodation and care packages for victims, in particular Spanish-speaking nationals, and conducting training and sensitization sessions to governmental and non-governmental agencies.

The Trinidad Hotels Limited donated beds, sheet sets, blankets, and towels to the CTU for distribution to partner NGO-run shelters to contribute to the provision of care to victims; two shelters that consistently provided assistance to victims of trafficking benefited from the donation.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the CTU and the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT) was signed on August 3rd, 2018, allowing for the implementation of formal arrangements for protecting and assisting child victims. Under the MOU, a referral process and form were finalized with the CATT taking responsibility for providing housing, assisting in conducting interviews of the child, and addressing the social, psychological, and psychiatric needs of the minor.

At the end of 2018, the final draft of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the CTU and the Ministry of Labour, Small and Enterprise Development (MLSED) to formalize the joint investigations and sharing of data between the Labour Inspectorate and the CTU was being reviewed by the Permanent Secretary of that Ministry.

A Counter Trafficking Task Force 'Taken' was established under the ambit of the Office of the Attorney General bringing together representatives of key law enforcement agencies (SSA, Special Branch, Organised Crime Intelligence Unit, TTCG Intelligence Unit, CTU, Immigration, TOCU, FIU and AGs office to share information and intelligence on trafficking in persons and identify needed legislative amendments.

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:	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: <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 remained at Tier 2 rating in the USDOS 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report. The following chart shows Trinidad and Tobago's Tier ranking from 2011 to 2018.

Chart 8: Trinidad and Tobago Tier Ranking (2018)



Source: USDOS TIP Report 2018

The 2018 USDOS TIP Report noted that *'Many trafficking victims enter the country legally via Trinidad's international airport, while others appear to enter illegally via small boats from Venezuela, which is only seven miles offshore'* and that *'corruption in police and immigration has in the past been associated with facilitating prostitution and sex trafficking.'* The State Department offered the following recommendations to combat trafficking and remain at or improve the Tier ranking:

- Increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, including complicit officials and staff;
- increase proactive victim identification and screen among migrant populations;
- provide adequate funding for robust victim services, including accommodation;
- improve regulation of private labor recruitment agencies;
- increase training on trafficking for shelter staff;
- increase funding and services for language interpreters available to law enforcement and victim care;
- increase the ability to accept victim video testimony in court proceedings;
- increase the use of intelligence in trafficking investigations; and
- consider adding NGO representation to the anti-trafficking task force.

Many of these recommendations have already been instituted but need to be amplified.

Conclusion

Trinidad and Tobago continued to combat trafficking in persons through 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 rescue of eight victims of human trafficking of which five were minors trafficked for sexual exploitation marked a new development within the trafficking landscape in this country highlighting the need for an amplification of public sensitization to child trafficking, more intelligence gathering and proactive investigations to identifying traffickers and victims.

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 increased number of Spanish-speaking minor victims did however bring about new challenges for the Children's Authority.

The issue of illegal adoption of children born to mothers who are foreign nationals and who are illegally in the country became a matter of interest and concern to local authorities. Five persons were arrested and charged for attempting to illegally adopt a child.

Three alleged perpetrators including one female were arrested and charged for various trafficking in persons and other related offences.

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