



THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ANNUAL REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (2019)

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 2019.

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INTRODUCTION

Trafficking in Persons, commonly referred to as human trafficking, or modern-day slavery, is the criminal practice of exploitation of human beings. Traffickers, those intent on exploiting an individual, prey on the vulnerabilities of their victims, selecting those that they think will be most compliant. They offer false promises of lucrative jobs, income, stability, education, even romance, to attract people experiencing vulnerabilities such as poverty, unemployment, irregular immigration status, abuse, and family crises, deceiving them into thinking their life situation will get better. Once in the hands of the traffickers, the unsuspecting victims may be subjected to violence, rape, sexual assault, food deprivation, emotional abuse, manipulation, or torture. The life of a victim of human trafficking is one of prolonged and repeated trauma.

Victims may be of any sex, age, ethnicity, or social status however, globally, and here in Trinidad and Tobago, the data suggests that victims are almost always female, typically children, teenagers, or young adults, who are experiencing some form of economic hardship. The data also shows that migrants are predominantly vulnerable to human trafficking in the country of destination or detection.

Human trafficking is not, and should never be, accepted or tolerated in any society or country. While the phenomenon has a long history from the early forms of slavery to the modern forms of trafficking in persons, the suppression of slavery in all forms, traditional or modern-day, is one of the long-standing objectives of the international community. International instruments, from the International Agreement for the Suppression of the “White Slave Traffic” (1904) to the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949) and the now widely accepted Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish the Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000), all acknowledged the inhumane treatment and sexual exploitation of mainly women and girls, and endeavored to prevent it and punish the perpetrators.

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish the Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which by 2019 was acceded to by one hundred and seventy-seven (177) countries, 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.”*

This definition guides law enforcement in ascertaining a case of human trafficking and the evidence needed to achieve a conviction of the perpetrator.

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, based on the data, it is mainly a destination country. The demand within the country for commercial sex, and to a lesser extent cheap labour, has fueled the exploitation of persons, mostly migrants. Since 2016 there has been an increasing number of migrants from Venezuela entering this country, most in an irregular manner. It was estimated that approximately 20,000 to 25,000 Venezuelans entered Trinidad and Tobago in search of work and to escape the economic calamities in Venezuela. Thousands began claiming asylum citing political persecution. In response to the migrant crisis, and to alleviate reports of exploitation, a Migrant Registration Framework initiative was launched by the government to register Venezuelan nationals who were in the country legally or illegally and provide them with a Minister's Permit that enabled them to remain in the country. The Minister's Permit also granted them work permit exemptions to enable their search for job opportunities. Over sixteen thousand (16,000) Venezuelan migrants were registered during the approved period of the registration.

Despite the benefits granted under the migrant registration framework, exploitation reportedly continued and migrant smuggling into the country persisted even after the registration exercise ended. In 2019, the largest number of victims of trafficking was detected in Trinidad and Tobago. Forty (40) victims were identified, thirty-eight of whom were female Venezuelan nationals trafficked for of sexual exploitation. More disturbing is the fact that fourteen (14) of the Venezuelan victims were minors aged between fourteen (14) to seventeen (17) at the time of rescue.

The data from 2013 to 2019 shows that young adult women and teenaged girls, are predominantly affected by human trafficking in this country lured by false promises of jobs, love, and better life chances. The sexual exploitation of minor females has steadily increased over the period 2016 to 2019 with twenty (20) girls aged fourteen to seventeen falling victim to sex trafficking.

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 2019 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

Preventing trafficking in persons includes educating the population about the crime of trafficking, how it affects communities and the guiles employed by the traffickers to enslave individuals. Strategies to alert the citizenry include public awareness campaigns through the engagement of the media-press, radio and television, and formal seminars, workshops, and presentations. It also requires well-trained staff who can recognize vulnerabilities, identify victims of trafficking, and disrupt the operations of the traffickers.

1.1 National Plan of Action

The National Plan of Action for the period 2016-2020 was created by the National Task Force Steering Committee, comprising of Permanent Secretaries of several key Ministries. The plan included measures for the:

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

In 2019, the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons established a National Task Force Working Group Against Trafficking in Persons comprising senior representatives from stakeholder Ministries and private sector organizations. The aim of the Working Group was to draft a National Plan of Action for 2021 and beyond.

1.2 Public Outreach

In 2019 several initiatives to raise awareness among the public and build capacity among the staff were undertaken.

The Ministry of National Security partnered with the producers of the radio talk show 'Eye on Dependency' sponsoring twenty-five (25) sessions under a 'Know your Rights Campaign' to discuss matters on human trafficking labour laws, foreign nationals working in Trinidad and Tobago, the role of the TTPS in reducing human trafficking, effects of prostitution on family and personal well-being, discouraging the demand for commercial sex, and rights of victims and victim care and other national security related issues. The program was held on Sundays from 6:15 to 8:00pm and added a bi-lingual component to reach the Spanish-speaking migrant community. Additionally, Eye on Dependency aired eight PSAs on human trafficking.

The CTU continued the partnership with Eye on Dependency, to use the locally produced film 'Trafficked' during sensitization session to raise awareness. Similarly, the collaboration with Caribbean Kids and Families Therapy Organization continued as two live puppet shows about human trafficking were performed to children at the Guiseppi Preparatory school and La Romaine High School. The CTU partnered with the CHOICE (Creating a Holistic Option for the Intervention of Child Exploitation) Foundation in Tobago to host a workshop on human trafficking at the Scarborough Library to mark Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

In July 2019 the Gender and Child Affairs Division of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of National Security and the Counter Trafficking Unit launched an outreach program called 'Project S.A.R.A.H' targeting males aged eighteen (18) and older to create an awareness of the relationship between gender norms and stereotypes, and human trafficking and sexual exploitation as it relates to gender-based issues. The project highlighted the indicators and vulnerabilities of victims of human trafficking and the importance of identifying, reporting, and stopping it.

1.3 Sensitization Campaigns

The CTU provided sensitization sessions to governmental agencies, schools, faith-based organizations, and other private sector organizations during 2019. In total twenty-five (25) sensitization sessions were delivered, reaching one thousand one hundred and sixty (1160) participants. Table 1 shows the training and sensitization sessions conducted during 2019:

Table 1: Sensitization Sessions

Organization	# Sessions	# Participants
Black Rock Primary School	1	44
Scarborough R.C. School	1	56
Scarborough Methodist Primary School	1	78
Bright Gems Day Care	1	50
TTPS Executive	2	46
TTPS	1	48
TTPS and Immigration Officers	1	38
TTPS Community Policing Secretariat	1	16
TTPS SORT	1	25
TTPS St. Joseph Police Station	1	39
TTPS Victim and Witness Support Unit	1	120
Strategic Services Agency	1	25
NALIS	1	90
Energy Sector Security Initiative	1	18
National Gas Company	1	35
National Energy Corporation	1	35
Phoenix Park Gas Processors	1	20
PLIPDECO	1	12
Pointe-a-Pierre Rotary Club	1	25
Metronomes Sports and Cultural Club	1	65
Church of the Nazarene	1	50
Open Bible National Youth Overcomers Camp	1	130
Siparia Ridge Walk Camp	1	60
NGO Workshop (US Embassy)	1	35
TOTAL	25	1160

1.4 CTU 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 receives tips about potential situations involving all forms of trafficking in persons and can initiate the launch of an investigation by law enforcement officers. Only thirty-five (35) reports were received in 2019, compared to fifty-five (55) in 2018 and forty-seven (47) in 2017.

1.5 Social Media

The use of social media networks has become the main way for people to interact in modern societies. Online platforms are increasingly being used by traffickers to identify, contact, and entrap victims in exploitative scams. In recognition of this fact, the CTU uses some of the following available platforms to disseminate information about human trafficking and provide another avenue for the public and potential or actual victims to contact the Unit:

- **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

1.6 Staff Training

In December 2019, the CTU conducted in-house training for Assistant Social Workers and members of the Special Task Force who were assigned to the Unit to provide support to the victims and investigations into suspected cases of human trafficking.

To raise the image and role of the CTU in the fight against human trafficking, a brand and design competition for an official logo for the CTU was launched in October 2019.

2. PROTECTION

Protection centers on proactive identification of victims, referring them for a comprehensive array of services, directly providing or funding NGOs to provide those services, and supporting the victims as they rebuild their lives. The active detection and identification of victims by first responders and service providers are critically important to government's ability to combat human trafficking.

2.1 Investigating, Screening, and Identification of victims

In 2019, the CTU received seventy-eight (78) reports of suspected cases of human trafficking from sources such as the Immigration Division, Police Stations, foreign missions, confidential informants, NGOs and the CTU hotline. Twenty-three (23) of the reports received were deemed to be credible, and investigations initiated.

During the investigations, the authorized officers within the CTU screened one hundred and eighty-two (182) persons for human trafficking indicators. From these initial screenings, fifty (50) persons- (two (2) adult males, fourteen (14) minor females and thirty-four (34) adult females), were identified as possible victims of trafficking. Table 2 shows these suspected victims by nationality, gender, and type of presumed exploitation.

Table 2: Number of Suspected Victims by Nationality, Gender and Type of Exploitation (2019)

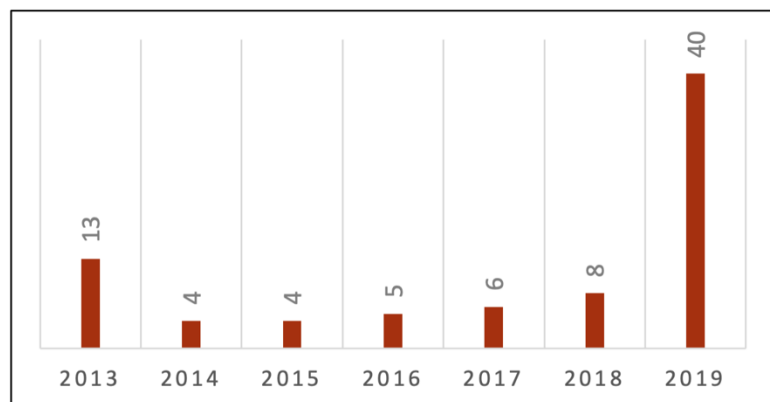
Country of Nationality	# Male	Type of Exploitation	# Female	Type of Exploitation
India	1	Forced Labour	0	N/A
China	1	Forced Labour	1	Sexual
Venezuela	0	N/A	47	Sexual
Total	2		48	

2.1.1 Victim Identification

In-depth interviews with the suspected victims and intensive investigations led to forty (40) persons being verified as victims of human trafficking. One adult male from India and one adult male from China were deemed to be victims of forced labour, while fourteen (14) female minors and twenty-four (24) adult females, all from Venezuela, were positively identified as victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

The forty (40) identified victims in 2019 brought the total number of positively verified victims of trafficking for the period 2013 to 2019 to eighty (80). Chart xx shows the number of victims identified for each year.

Chart 1: Number of Identified Victims of Trafficking (2013-2019)



2.1.2 Victim Profile

There is no single profile for victims of human trafficking, however vulnerability is the common underlying trait. Deprivation, poverty, unemployment, family crisis and abuse are the main vulnerabilities that can lead to and increase the chance of victimization. Traffickers prey on the vulnerabilities of their victims, deliberately targeting people they believe are 'easy to exploit'. They then use the allure of opportunity and provide false promises of lucrative jobs, stability, education, reliable income, or romance to attract the targeted victim. Once in the country of destination, traffickers use different means to subdue their victims including physical abuse, rape, gang rape, starvation, beatings, and forced drug use, threats of violence to the victims and the victims' families, and/or confinement.

2.1.3 Victims' Vulnerabilities

Based on the accounts of the victims detected in 2019, it was noted that all came from families in poor economic circumstances. The female victims from Venezuela were single, schooled up to primary or secondary school level, unskilled and unemployed. Most of the adult women and two of the 17-year-olds were parents of at least one child. Both male victims were also single, unskilled, unemployed in their home country and had limited education. All, including the minors, wanted to work to ease their financial hardships.

2.1.4 The Act: Targeting, Recruiting and Transporting Victims

In all the cases, the victims were recruited by word of mouth where someone they knew told them about a job opportunity in Trinidad; once they showed interest or agreed, the traffickers in Trinidad communicated with them via WhatsApp or Facebook. The Venezuelan women and girls were offered jobs as bartenders, pub waitresses, domestic workers, and models doing product promotions/ marketing. The male victims were offered jobs as handymen and cooks. All were told that the jobs would pay between US\$1500-\$3000.

2.1.5 The Means: Control Methods

The experiences of the female victims were much different from the men. The women reported being locked up, beaten, raped, their IDs taken away, and forced into prostitution. They were told of a previously unknown 'debt' they had to re-pay for the trip to Trinidad ranging from US\$1500 to US\$2000. Several told investigators they were forced to consume drugs and alcohol. They were taken to bars, private houses, and hotels in different parts of the country to perform sex acts with men who paid the traffickers. Some victims stated the traffickers had guns threatening to kill them and their family if they did not have sex with a client. They spoke of getting food once per day and the houses they were kept in had several surveillance cameras with men guarding the doors to prevent their escape. In many cases they were able to escape on their own or were rescued by the police during raids.

... traffickers had guns threatening to kill them and their family.

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. Thirty-eight (38) of the victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation, mainly for forced prostitution, while two victims were trafficked for forced labour.

2.1.7 Exploitation of Victims 2013-2019

Exploitation is the deliberate ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person. It is taking advantage of another person or situation for personal or other gain. Exploitation comes in many forms, including slavery, being controlled by a person or a group, forced labour, domestic violence and abuse and sexual violence and abuse; globally sexual exploitation has been the predominant form of exploitation.

The data on trafficking in persons in Trinidad and Tobago from 2013, shows that sexual exploitation has been the dominant form of exploitation. An examination of the period 2013-2019 shows that seventy-two (72) of the eighty (80) victims of trafficking or ninety-one percent (91%) of all victims identified in this country have been subjected to sexual exploitation (including forced prostitution and sexual servitude) while the other eight (8) victims, or nine percent (9%), were subjected to forced labour (including domestic servitude). The disparity between the trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation and forced labour is highlighted in Chart 2:

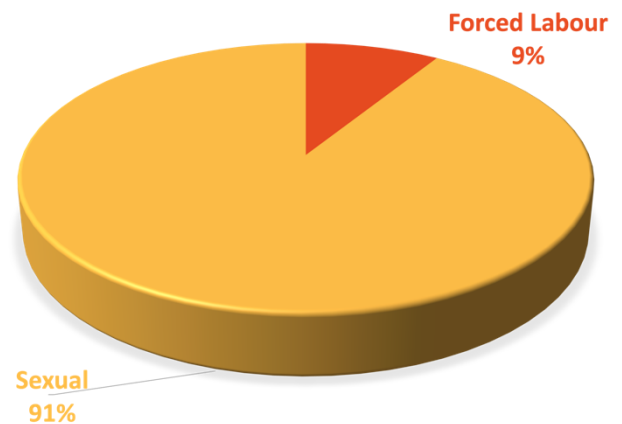
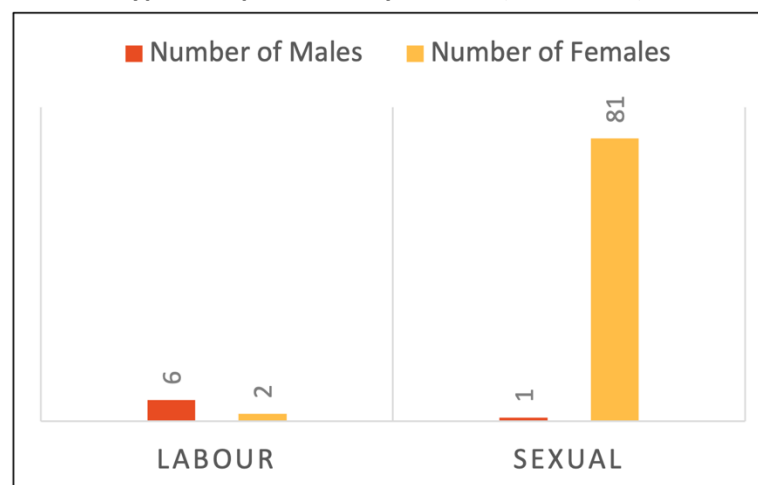


Chart 2: Type of Exploitation

2.1.8 Exploitation by Gender

Across the world women and girls are the most vulnerable to human trafficking, mainly sex trafficking. In Trinidad and Tobago seventy-three (73) of the eighty (80) victims were female. Fourteen (14) of the female victims were minors and fifty-nine (59) adults. Two (2) adult females were victims of forced labour while the minors and the other adult females were sexually exploited. All but one male victim, a minor, were subjected to forced labour, the male minor was the victim of sexual servitude. This disproportionality is represented in Chart 3:

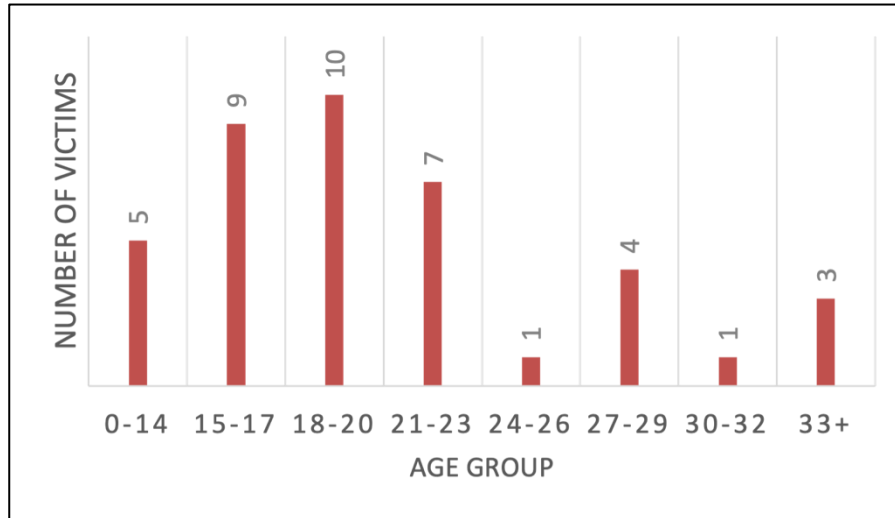
Chart 3: Type of Exploitation by Gender (2013-2019)



2.1.9 Age of Victims (2019)

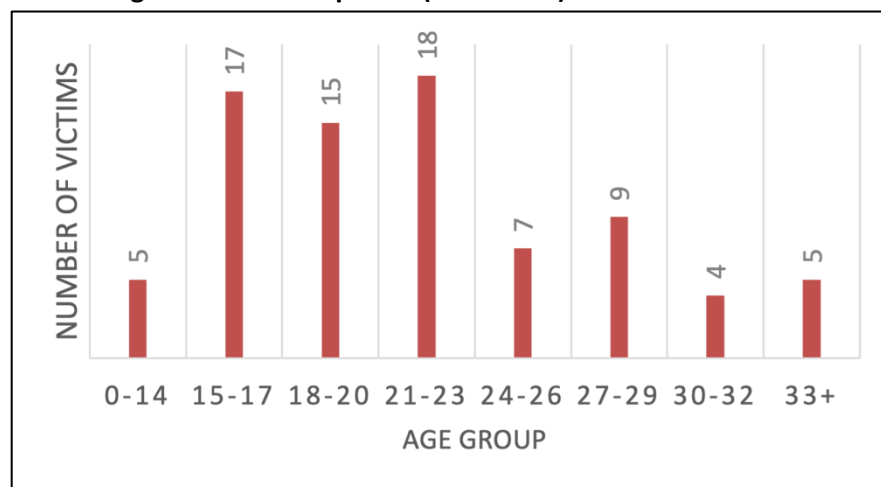
The age of the victims identified in 2019 ranged from 14 to 42 years old. Fourteen (14) victims were female minors aged fourteen (14) to seventeen (17) at the time of rescue. The male Chinese victim of forced labour was aged 42 while one female victim of sex trafficking was aged 41. **Chart 4** shows the age groups of the victims detected in 2019.

Chart 4: Age of Victims (2019)



Over the period 2013 to 2019, fifty-five (55) of the eighty (80) verified victims of human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago were between the ages of fourteen and twenty-three representing sixty-nine percent (69%) of all victims; twenty-seven percent (27%) were minors. While these age groups are consistent with international findings that traffickers target young adults, mostly female, the number of minors being sexually exploited in Trinidad and Tobago is alarming as it shows a growing demand for sex with young girls.

Chart 5: Age of Victims for period (2013-2019)

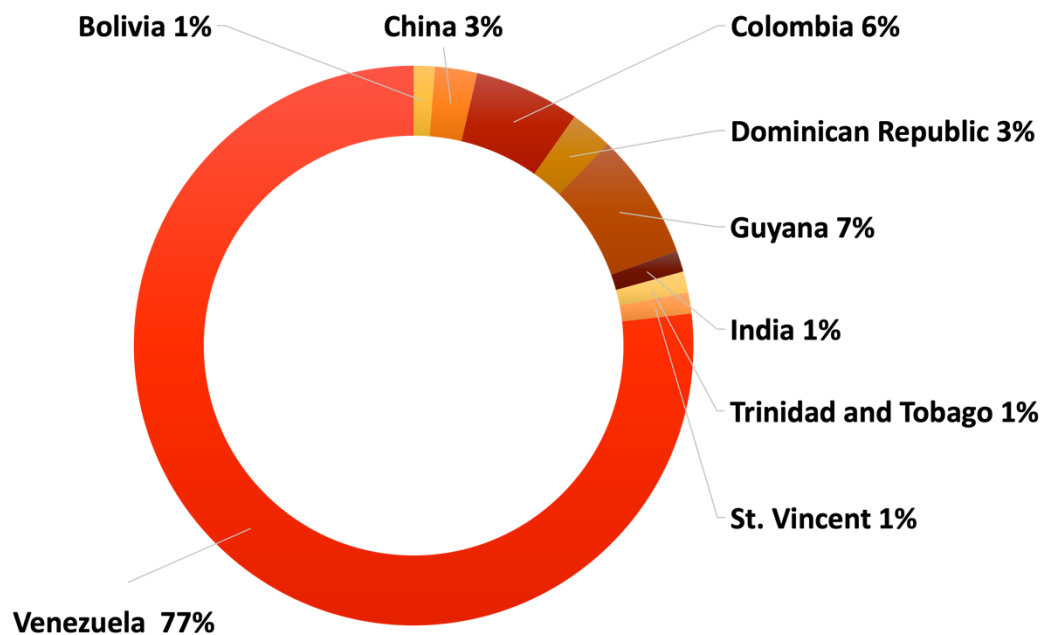


2.1.10 Nationality of Victims

Migrants are the most detected victims of trafficking in persons in Trinidad and Tobago. This is consistent with global findings that migrants are most vulnerable to trafficking in the country of destination/detection. In 2019, one national of China, one national of India, and thirty-eight (38) nationals of Venezuela were identified as victims of trafficking.

Data from 2013 to 2019 show that seventy-nine (79) of the eighty (80) identified victims were foreign nationals. Venezuelan nationals were the most impacted by human trafficking in this country, accounting for 77% of all detected victims of trafficking in persons. Chart 6 shows the percentage of victims by nationality.

Chart 6: Nationality of Victims (2013-2019)



2.2 Assistance

Assistance to and protection of victims of trafficking includes protecting their privacy and identity as well as aiding their physical, psychological, and social recovery. Service providers must consider the age, gender, nationality and cultural background, and special needs of victims, and respect their human rights. The physical and psychological consequences resulting from the abuse and trauma experienced by the victims continue to affect their well-being long after they exit the trafficking situation. From the recounts of the lived experience of the victims detected in Trinidad, corroborated by the investigations conducted by the CTU investigators, there is no doubt that the victims suffered severe exploitation and trauma at the hands of their traffickers, especially those sex trafficked.

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 his 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

Once a victim has been rescued, they must immediately be placed into safe accommodation as the law frowns upon victims being placed 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.

Accommodation for victims and suspected victims, both adult and child, continues to be the greatest challenge for the CTU and Social Workers. The accommodation offered by State Agencies and NGOs tend to be poorly equipped, poorly managed and in some cases are in unsecured compounds.

During 2019, site visits were made to buildings in San Fernando and Arima owned by Petrotrin and the HDC to determine their suitability for use to house victims. They were however deemed unsuitable.

2.2.2 Physical and Mental Well-Being

The victim, upon rescue, must be taken for medical attention and assessment. With most victims of trauma, psychological counselling is an essential element of their rehabilitation. The Family Planning Association, the Rape Crisis Center and provide medical assistance and psychological counselling to the victims along with other private professionals who volunteer their services to shelters and NGOs. The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFA) provided psychosocial support to the victims of trafficking. Additionally, the immediate personal needs of the victim, such as food, clothing and intimate supplies, must also be assessed and addressed.

2.2.3 Caring for Foreign-Born Unaccompanied Minors

Section 44 (1) of the TIP Act mandates the CTU and the CATT provide assistance to 'victims who are children in a manner that is in the child's best interest and appropriate to the child's situation. Fourteen (14) victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation were minors challenging the ability of the Children's Authority and CTU to appropriately care for these children.

The CATT encountered obstacles in housing the significant number of children, with the St. Jude's Home being the only option. All the children were taken for medical and psychological assessment and their well-being continually assessed by Social Workers who visited the home twice per week or as needed.

As they were all unaccompanied minors, the CATT was required to obtain Orders from the Children's Court relative to temporary guardianship. With the help of the Venezuelan Embassy, contact was made with some of the parents or family members of the minors in Venezuela. The Social Workers facilitated supervised calls with the victims and their relatives.

Together with counselling sessions, they were exposed to art therapy and had the opportunity to learn English and other life skills.

3. PROSECUTION

Trafficking in persons is one of the most lucrative of organized crime activities attracting all levels of criminal interests. Prosecution therefore must focus on identifying the perpetrators responsible for committing the crime of trafficking in persons and the ancillary offences and bringing them to justice.

Traffickers exploit their victims for financial gain, living off the proceeds of their crime. As victims are forced into work, the money that they generate is sometimes disguised before introduced to financial institutions. It is for this reason that trafficking in persons is considered a money laundering predicate offence. While there is no data available relative to the profits of the traffickers in this country, the Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (FIUTT) noted in their 2019 Annual Report that there were twenty-three suspicious transactions reports (STRs) relative to human trafficking, amounting to one million, nine hundred and thirty-two thousand and fifty-six dollars (TT\$1,932,056). This signals the illicit profitability of the crime.

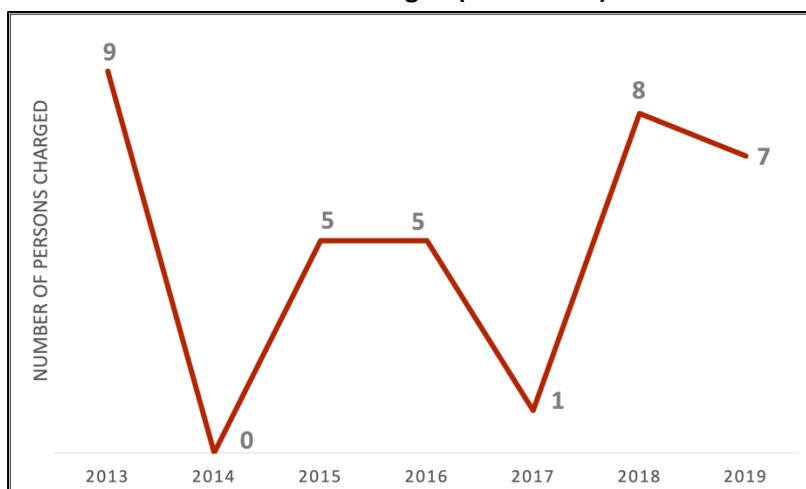
Perpetrators can be men and women, intimate partners, complete strangers to the victims, criminal organizations, business owners, peers, family members, diplomats, farm owners, factory operators, large or small companies, or gangs. Thorough investigation leading to the prosecution and punishment of traffickers provides justice to victims and discourages further trafficking crimes.

3.1 Persons Charged for Trafficking in Persons and Related Offences

The CTU received seventy-eight (78) reports of suspected cases of human trafficking and launched investigations into twenty-three (23) of the reports that were deemed to be credible. Seven (7) persons including three (3) Chinese nationals, one Venezuelan and three (3) citizens of Trinidad and Tobago were charged with trafficking in children and other related offences. Other charges included possession of cocaine, possession of a firearm and gang activity.

Since the enactment of the TIP Act in 2013, thirty-five (35) persons have been charged for trafficking in persons and other related offences. Chart 7 shows the number of persons charged since 2013.

Chart 7: Number of Persons Charged (2013- 2019)



3.2 Status of Court Matters (2013-2019)

As of 2019, eight accused had been committed to stand trial in the High Court. One matter was dismissed in 2019 for want of prosecution while the others remained at the preliminary inquiry stage. Warrants were issued for two accused in 2018 matters after they failed to appear in court.

3.3 Charges Laid Against the Accused (2013-2019)

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. Five of the accused were charged under the Anti-Gang Act and two were charged under the Firearms Act and Dangerous Drugs Act. Table 3 shows the charges proffered against the accused over the period 2013 to 2019.

Table 3: Charges Proffered

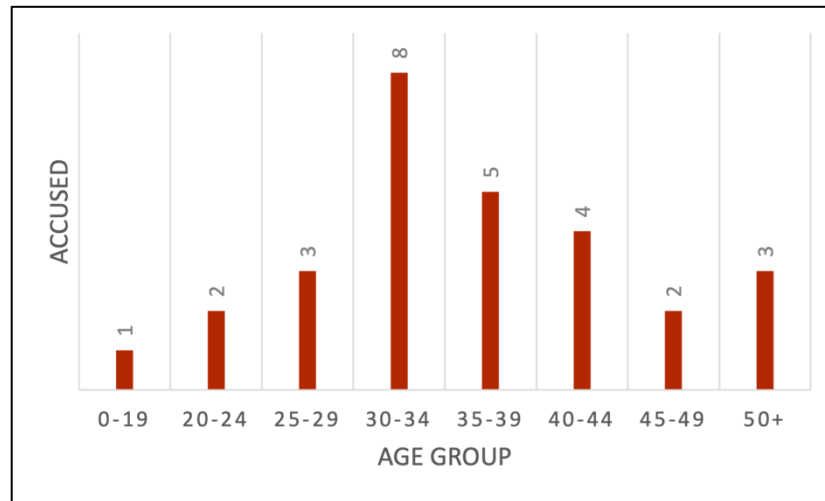
CHARGE	LEGISLATION AND SECTION
Receiving for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 17
Receiving for the purpose of labour exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 16
Harbouring for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 16
Transporting for the purpose 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	Sexual Offences Act
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)
Possession of Firearm	Firearms Act- section 5 (1)
Possession of Ammunition	Firearms Act- section 5 (1)
Possession of Cocaine for the purpose of Trafficking	Dangerous Drugs Act- section 5 (4)
Possession of Marijuana	Dangerous Drugs Act- section 5 (1)
Being a Gang Leader, initiated, organized planned, financed directed and managed a gang related activity in the recruitment, transportation, transfer, received and harboured a child for the purpose of exploitation	Anti-Gang Act section 5(1)
Supporting a Gang Leader/gang in the commission of a Gang related activity namely Trafficking in children	Anti-Gang Act section 5(1)

3.4 Age of Accused

The seven (7) alleged traffickers of female minors charged in 2019 ranged in age from thirty-three (33) to forty-six (46).

An examination of available data for twenty-seven (27) of the thirty-five (35) persons charged since 2013 showed their ages ranged from eighteen to fifty-two. Chart 8 shows the ages of the accused. Approximately 50% of the accused were aged between thirty and forty.

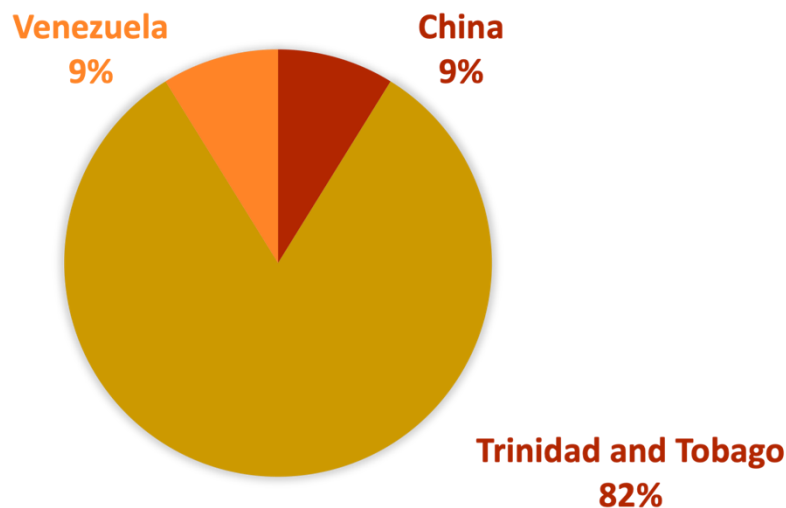
Chart 8: Age of Accused (2013 -2019)



3.5 Nationality of Accused

Globally it is recognized that persons involved in human trafficking are mainly nationals of the country where the trafficking is occurring. Their aim is to profit from the exploitation of their victims. In Trinidad and Tobago most of the persons charged with trafficking in persons, trafficking in children and related offences are citizens of the country. Chart 9 shows the nationality of all persons charged since 2013.

Chart 9: Nationality of Accused (2019)



4. PARTNERSHIPS

The CTU continued to partner with local and international organizations to investigate cases of human trafficking, provide accommodation and assistance to victims, facilitate training opportunities and raise awareness among the population.

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.

A Working Group comprising senior representatives of from Ministries represented on the NTFATIP was established to work together to draft the National Plan of Action 2020.

A Working Committee for the delivery of care to victims of trafficking was appointed by Cabinet in November 2019. The goal of the Committee is to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services to deliver care to victims of human trafficking and develop a victim care program to include reintegration.

The Division of Gender and Child Affairs under the Office of the Prime Minister in collaboration with the CTU and the non-governmental organization Caribbean Umbrella for Restorative Behaviour (CURB), to launch Project S.A.R.A.H targeting the male population.

The CTU continued its partnership with Eye on Dependency, participating in that organization's initiative named 'Ready, Set, Grow!' targeting children transitioning into secondary school. This program exposes children and parents to the realities of secondary school highlighting the physiological changes and social experiences they will face. The CTU presented how children can avoid becoming victims of traffickers and predators and what parents need to look for.

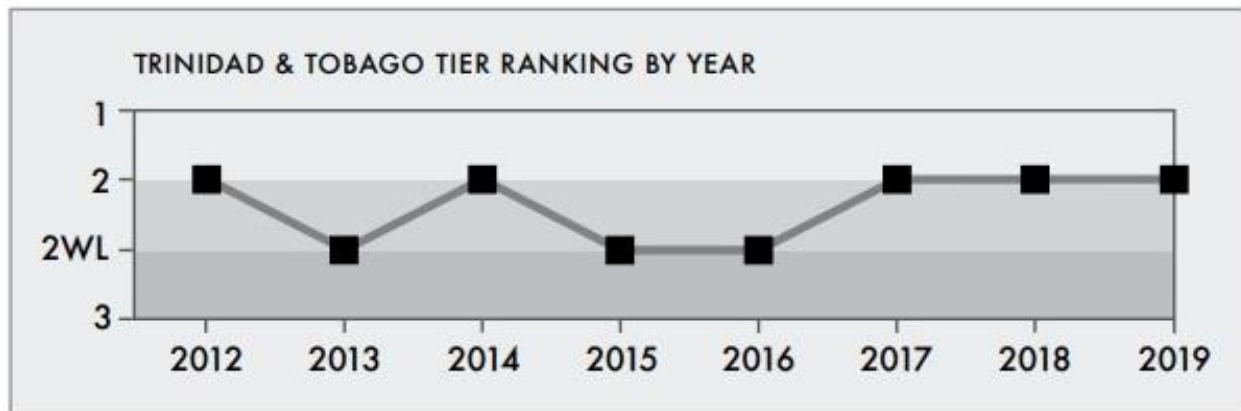
4.1 The US Department of State Annual Trafficking in Persons Report

The Trafficking in Persons Report, or the TIP Report, is an annual report published 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 first appeared in the USDOS TIP Report in 2009 with a Tier 2 rating and has oscillated between Tier 2 and Tier 2 Watch List since then. In 2019 Trinidad and Tobago was ranked as Tier 2. The 2019 report is based on a country assessment carried out from April 2018 to March 2019 and published in June 2019. Chart 9 shows Trinidad and Tobago's Tier ranking from 2012 to 2019.

Chart 9: Trinidad and Tobago Tier Ranking (2019)



Source: USDOS TIP Report 2019

The Report stated 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 government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas.'*

The Report noted that *'Traffickers are increasingly targeting vulnerable foreign young women and girls between the ages of 15 and 21. Because of deteriorating economic conditions in their home country, Venezuelans are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and there has been a large influx of Venezuelans to Trinidad and Tobago in recent years.'* Some of the criticisms highlighted in the report were:

‘The CTU faced organization and management challenges, limited capacity and resources, reduced ties with international partners and other law enforcement agencies, which hindered its efforts, and limited coordination between the CTU and Department of Public Prosecutions.’

The Report set out the following recommendations:

- Increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, including complicit officials.
- Increase proactive victim identification and screening among migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees.
- Ensure trafficking victims are adequately screened so that they are not penalized for crimes that occurred during their exploitation.
- Provide adequate funding for robust trafficking investigations and victim services, including accommodation.
- Improve cooperation between the Counter Trafficking Unit, prosecutors, and NGOs to increase the number of cases that proceed to trial.
- Increase funding and services for language interpreters available to law enforcement and victim care.
- Provide specialized care to child trafficking victims.
- Strengthen oversight and regulation of private labor recruitment agencies and domestic workers.
- Increase training on trafficking for NGOs and shelter staff to improve their ability to identify and care for potential trafficking victims.
- Increase the ability to accept victim video testimony in court proceedings.
- Consider increasing NGO representation to the anti-trafficking task force.
- Begin drafting a national action plan for the period beyond 2020.

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 rescue of forty victims of human trafficking of which fourteen 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.

Seven alleged perpetrators including three Chinese nationals and one Venezuelan national of the crimes were arrested and charged for various trafficking in persons and other related offences including drug and firearm charges highlighting the criminal nature of the trafficking enterprise.

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