



THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ANNUAL REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (2020)

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 2020.

CONTENTS	PAGE
Introduction.....	3
Trinidad and Tobago Context	4
1. Prevention.....	6
1.1. National Plan of Action.....	6
1.2. Public Outreach	6
1.3. Sensitization Campaigns.....	6
1.4. CTU Hotline.....	6
1.5. Social Media	7
1.6. Staff Training.....	7
2. Protection.....	8
2.1 Investigations, Screening, and Victim Identification	8
2.1.1 Victim Identification.....	9
2.1.2 Victim Profile.....	9
2.1.3 The Act: Targeting, Recruiting, and Transporting Victims.....	9
2.1.4 The Means: Control Methods	10
2.1.5 The Purpose: Exploitation.....	10
2.1.6 Exploitation by Type and Gender.....	10
2.1.7 Nationality of Victims.....	11
2.1.8 Age of Victims	12
2.2 Assistance	12
2.2.1 Accommodation.....	13
2.2.2 Physical and Mental Well-Being.....	13
2.2.3 Caring for Foreign-Born Unaccompanied Minors	13
3. Prosecution	14
3.1. Arrests and Criminal Charges	14
3.2. Status of the Court Matters (2013-2020)	14
3.3. Charges Laid Against the Accused (2013-2020)	15
3.4. Profile of Accused	16
4. Partnerships	17
4.1 The US Department of State Annual Trafficking in Persons Report.....	17
Conclusion	19

TABLES	PAGE
Table 1: Number of Suspected Victims by Nationality, Gender and Type of Exploitation (2020)	8
Table 2: Charges Proffered	15

CHARTS	PAGE
Chart 1: Calls Received on CTU Hotline (2013-2020)	5
Chart 2: Number of Identified Victims of Trafficking (2013-2020)	9
Chart 3: Type of Exploitation (2013-2021)	10
Chart 4: Type of Exploitation by Gender (2013-2020)	11
Chart 5: Nationality of Victims (2013-2020)	11
Chart 6: Age of Victims for period 2013-2020	12
Chart 7: Number of Persons Charged (2013- 2020)	14
Chart 8: Age of Accused	16
Chart 9: USDOS TIP Report Trinidad and Tobago Tier Ranking	18

INTRODUCTION

Trafficking in persons is a covert activity involving hidden populations exploited in various forms, in all countries worldwide and disproportionately affects the most vulnerable in society. The Covid-19 pandemic (the pandemic) which erupted in 2020, exacerbated existing disadvantages, poverty, and vulnerabilities in every country.

The pandemic changed how we lived, worked, learned, and interacted with each other. The closure of workplaces, lockdowns, curfews, and implementation of measures to control the spread of the virus and the rapid decline of economic conditions led to massive job losses and severe financial difficulties for many in society. While social distancing guidelines led to a virtual existence in both personal and professional life, human trafficking, already a hidden crime, was driven further underground as most business and activities moved to a virtual online platform.

As the pandemic caused countries to close borders and restrict movement within communities, traffickers adapted by increasing online sexual exploitation, taking advantage of the opportunities to recruit victims and hide illegal content. Young girls were approached by older men on social media and apps such as Tinder, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, YOLO, and Lemon and groomed by traffickers for online sexual exploitation. Globally it was reported that the onset of the pandemic caused the number of pornographic imageries, including images of children being sexually abused at home to increase significantly. The growth of online sexual exploitation severely impacted the detection of victims.

Traffickers also responded to the closure of bars, clubs, and massage parlors by moving the sexual exploitation of adults and children to private homes and apartments. Victims exploited in industries, such as the sex industry, construction, and manufacturing, faced heightened risk of exposure to COVID-19. Some victims were abandoned by their traffickers, while others experienced increased control and violence.

Although the pandemic changed the world, trafficking in persons and the exploitation of vulnerable people continued. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish the Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 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.”*

Traffickers adapted to the inconveniences brought about by the pandemic, changing their modus operandi to suit the new reality.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO CONTEXT

As noted in previous Annual Reports, 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 and enacted domestic legislation to give effect to the TIP Protocol through The Trafficking in Persons Act (the TIP Act), 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.

Trinidad and Tobago like the rest of the world was severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The country closed its borders on March 23rd, 2020, and introduced a slew of control measures from lockdowns, closures, curfews, quarantines, and work from home initiatives to control the spread of the virus. Despite this however, foreign nationals continued to enter the country illegally from ports in Venezuela demonstrating a healthy human smuggling network and potentially undermining health control measures as it was noted that the Brazilian variant of the virus was first detected in Trinidad and Tobago, in a Venezuelan migrant.

Despite social distancing measures and closure of bars, clubs, brothels and other businesses, the demand within the country for commercial sex continued and fueled the sexual exploitation of female migrants. In 2022 the CTU identified four victims of sex trafficking all Venezuelan, all female, three of whom were minors. The data from 2013 to 2020 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 2020 with twenty-three (23) girls aged thirteen to seventeen falling victim to sex trafficking.

Responding to trafficking in persons

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

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

Reporting Requirements under the Trafficking in Persons Act

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

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

The 2021 Annual Report on Trafficking in Persons examines Trinidad and Tobago's counter-trafficking response within the '4-P Framework'—Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnerships. The data findings in this report might be impacted by the following factors: under- or inconsistent identification of victims of human trafficking, confidentiality concerns affecting the reporting of some variables, or general lack of available information.

1. PREVENTION

Preventing trafficking in persons 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 Task Force Working Group Against Trafficking in Persons comprising senior representatives from stakeholder Ministries and non-governmental organizations met virtually to continue the preparation of the draft National Plan of Action for 2021 and beyond. The plan was being drafted to include 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

1.2 Public Outreach

In 2020 very limited initiatives to raise awareness among the public and build capacity among the staff were undertaken due to control measures to mitigate the spread of Covid-19.

The Ministry of National Security continued the partnership with the producers of the radio talk show 'Eye on Dependency' to discuss matters on human trafficking and other national security related issues as these could be undertaken virtually.

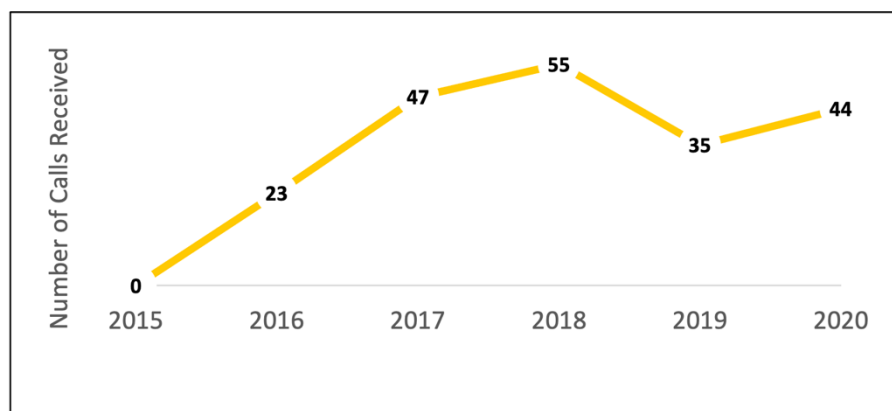
1.3 Sensitization Campaigns

Sensitizations sessions were halted in 2020 due to the control measures implemented to curb the spread of Covid-19.

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. Forty-four (44) reports were received in 2020, compared to thirty-five (35) in 2019. The number of calls received since the launch of the hotline is shown in Chart 1:

Chart 1: Calls Received on CTU Hotline



1.5 Social Media

The use of social media networks became the main way for people to interact during the pandemic. Online platforms were used by traffickers to identify, contact, and entrap victims in exploitative scams. In recognition of this fact, the CTU used 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

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the training of staff in 2020.

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. The Covid-19 pandemic, however, made it more difficult to identify victims of trafficking as illegal operations became more underground but no less prevalent during the pandemic. New measures were instituted by shelters as potential victims needed to be tested for Covid-19 and quarantined before shelters would accept them for residence and care.

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 Investigating, Screening, and Identification of Victims

In 2020, the CTU received seventy-nine (79) 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. Thirteen (13) exercises were conducted based on the reports and nine (9) further investigations initiated. During the exercises, thirty-five (35) people were rescued from potentially exploitative situations.

Fifty-eight (58) persons were screened for human trafficking indicators by the CTU and nineteen (19) persons—three (3) adult males, and sixteen (16) females were suspected as being potential victims of trafficking. Table 1 shows these suspected victims by nationality, gender, and type of presumed exploitation.

Table 1: Number of Suspected Victims by Nationality, Gender and Type of Exploitation (2020)

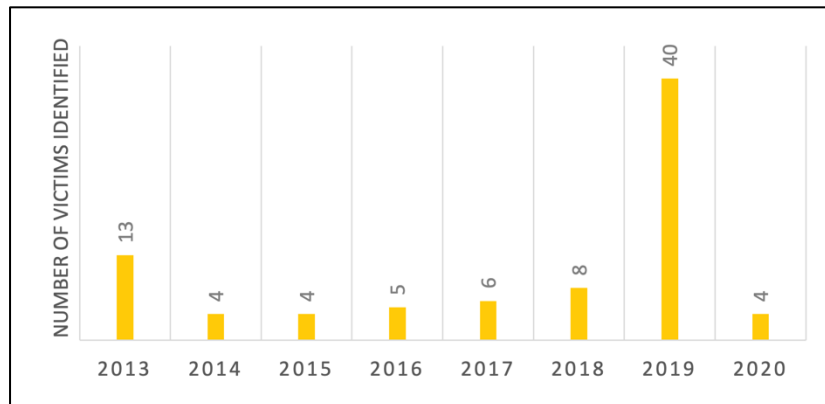
Country of Nationality	# Male	Type of Exploitation	# Female	Type of Exploitation
India	3	Forced Labour	0	N/A
Kenya	N/A	N/A	1	Forced Labour
Venezuela	0	N/A	15	Sexual
Total	3		16	

2.1.1 Victim Identification

In-depth interviews with the suspected victims and intensive investigations led to four (4) female Venezuelan nationals being verified as victims of human trafficking, three of them were minors with one being thirteen (13) years old. Of the other eleven Venezuelan females, ten (10) were found not to be victims of trafficking, and one (1) was inconclusive as the individual did not cooperate with the investigators and wanted to return to her home country. The males from India were crew members on board a vessel that became the subject of a court seizure following a dispute between the owners, the charterers of the vessel and the shipping agent for non-payment of bills. The vessel was eventually sold, and the men repatriated to their home country. The female Kenyan was deemed not to be a victim following detailed investigations by the CTU and the Labour Inspectorate.

The four (4) identified victims in 2020 brought the total number of positively verified victims of trafficking for the period 2013 to 2020 to eighty-four (84). Chart 2 shows the number of victims identified each year.

Chart 2: Number of Identified Victims of Trafficking (2013-2020)



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.

2.1.3 The Act: Targeting, Recruiting and Transporting Victims

Based on the accounts of the victims detected in 2020, it was observed 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. They all wanted to work to ease their financial hardships, and all entered the country illegally, before the closure of the borders.

In all the cases, the victims were recruited by word of mouth where someone they knew told them about a job opportunity in Trinidad; they were offered jobs as bartenders, pub waitresses, and domestic workers. Once they showed interest or agreed, the traffickers in Trinidad communicated with them via WhatsApp or Facebook and made the arrangements for them to travel by boat to illegal ports in Trinidad where they were met and transported to locations in south and central Trinidad.

2.1.4 The Means: Control Methods

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\$2500. They were taken to 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. These control measures are typical of the ways traffickers restrain their victims.

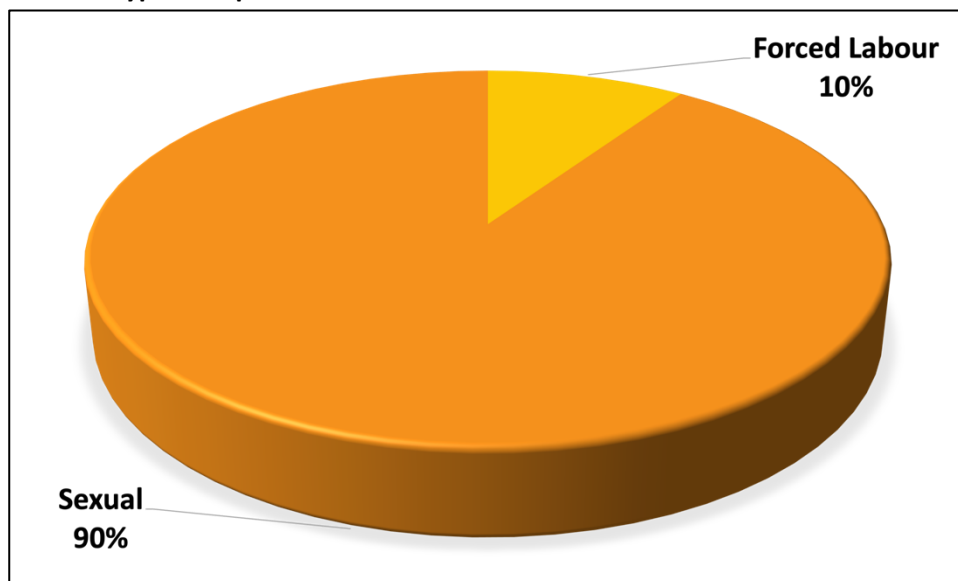
2.1.5 The Purpose: Exploitation

The purpose of trafficking in persons is always exploitation. Exploitation is the deliberate ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person and includes slavery, being controlled by a person or a group, forced labour, domestic violence and abuse, and sexual violence and abuse. The victims in 2020 were trafficked for the purpose of forced prostitution and sexual servitude.

2.1.6 Exploitation by Type and Gender

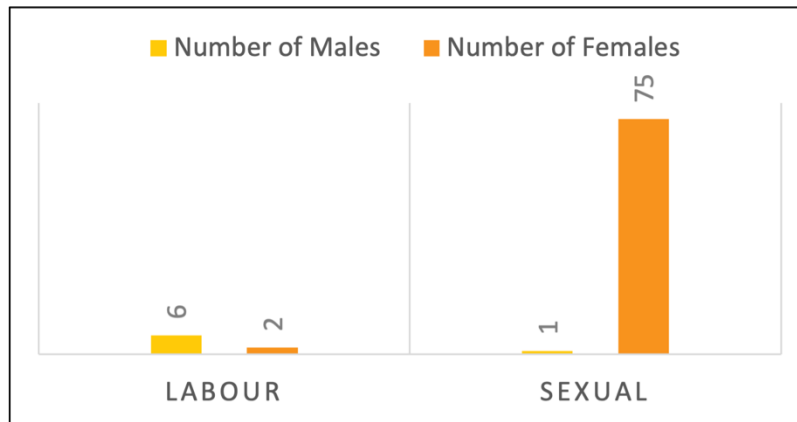
The data on trafficking in persons in Trinidad and Tobago from 2013, shows that sexual exploitation has been the dominant form of exploitation. Seventy-six (76) of the eighty-four (84) victims of trafficking, representing ninety percent (90%) of all victims identified in this country have been subjected to sexual exploitation (including forced prostitution and sexual servitude). The other eight (8) victims (ten percent (10%)) were exposed to forced labour (including domestic servitude). The disparity between the trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation and forced labour is highlighted in Chart 3:

Chart 3: Type of Exploitation



Women and girls are the most vulnerable to human trafficking, mainly sex trafficking. In Trinidad and Tobago seventy-six (76) of the eighty-four (84) victims were female- sixteen (16) were minors and sixty (60) adults. Of that number 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 shown in Chart 4:

Chart 4: Type of Exploitation by Gender (2013-2020)

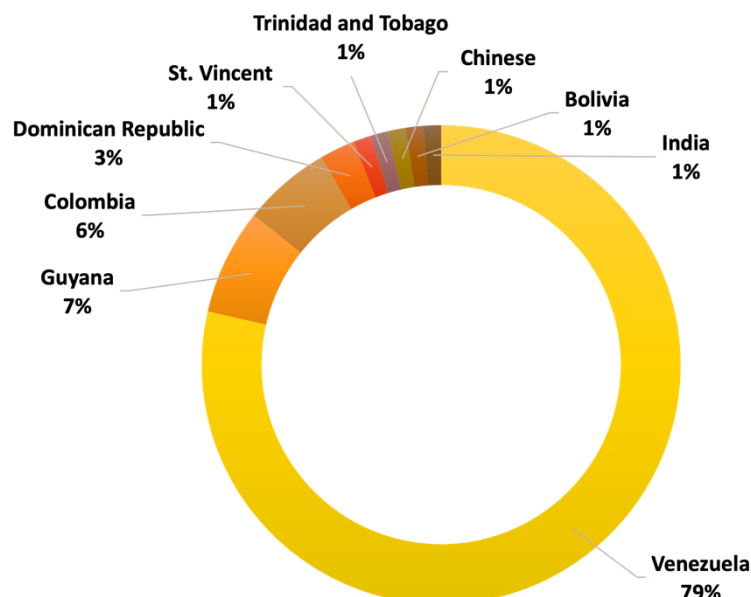


2.1.7 Nationality of Victims

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 2020, nationals of Venezuela were the main identified victims of trafficking.

Data from 2013 to 2020 show that eighty-three (83) of the eighty-four (84) identified victims were foreign nationals. Venezuelan nationals have been most exploited in this country, accounting for seventy-nine percent (79%) of all detected victims of trafficking in persons shown in Chart 6.

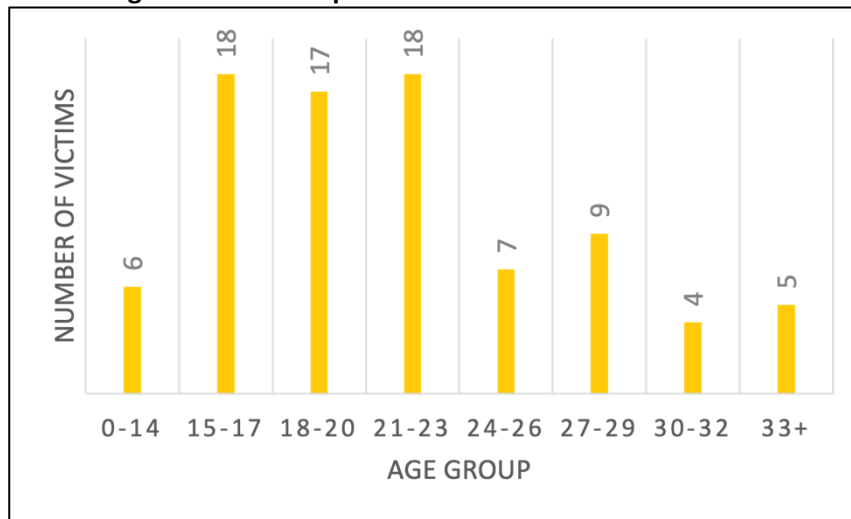
Chart 6: Nationality of Victims (2013-2020)



2.1.8 Age of Victims

One victim identified in 2020 was aged thirteen (13), two were aged seventeen (17) and one was eighteen (18) years old demonstrating the continued exploitation of and demand for young women and girls. Over the period 2013 to 2020, fifty-nine (59) of the eighty-four (84) verified victims of human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago were between the ages of thirteen (13) and twenty-three (23). Chart 5 shows the number of victims by age group.

Chart 5: Age of Victims for period 2013-2020



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.

In February 2020, the first meeting of the Working Committee for the delivery of care to victims of trafficking was held under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS). The aim of the Committee was to develop a victim care program. Despite the lockdowns and work from home mandates caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Committee continued to meet virtually to develop the program and finalize the Manual for Social Service Providers that was drafted in 2019.

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, the Children’s Authority and Social Workers. The accommodation offered by State Agencies and NGOs are poorly equipped, poorly managed and in some cases are unsecured compounds.

During 2020, the Cabinet agreed to the establishment and operationalizing of a transition home for migrant girls and approved a partnership between the Ministry of National Security and the Gender and Child Affairs Division of the Office of the Prime Minister for the management of the home. This Children’s Community Residence was intended to house seventeen minor females. At the same time the International Organization for Migration (IOM) working with the CTU and the CATT, continued to provide accommodation and assistance to fifteen minors aged between fourteen and seventeen.

2.2.2 Physical and Mental Well-Being

The victim, upon rescue, must be taken for medical attention and assessment of their immediate personal needs such as food, clothing and intimate supplies. In 2020, all victims had to be tested for Covid-19 and quarantined for the stipulated time set by the Ministry of Health. For the very young victims rescued in 2020 the isolation of quarantine was a difficult time for them. With most victims of trauma, psychological counselling is an essential element of their rehabilitation. The Family Planning Association and Families in Action along with other private professionals who volunteer their services to shelters and NGOs provided medical assistance and psychological counselling to the victims. The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFA) also provided psychosocial support to the victims of trafficking.

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. The increasing number of foreign minors trafficked for sexual exploitation continued to challenge the ability of the Children’s Authority and CTU to appropriately care for these children.

While the CATT encountered obstacles in housing the significant number of children, all the minors were taken for medical and psychological assessment. The minors rescued in 2019 who were still under the care of the CATT in 2020 were continually assessed by Social Workers who visited the home twice per week or as needed.

The three adolescents rescued in 2020 were all unaccompanied minors, and as such 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.

All of the minors were provided with regular counselling sessions, exposed to art therapy and had the opportunity to learn English and other life skills.

3. PROSECUTION

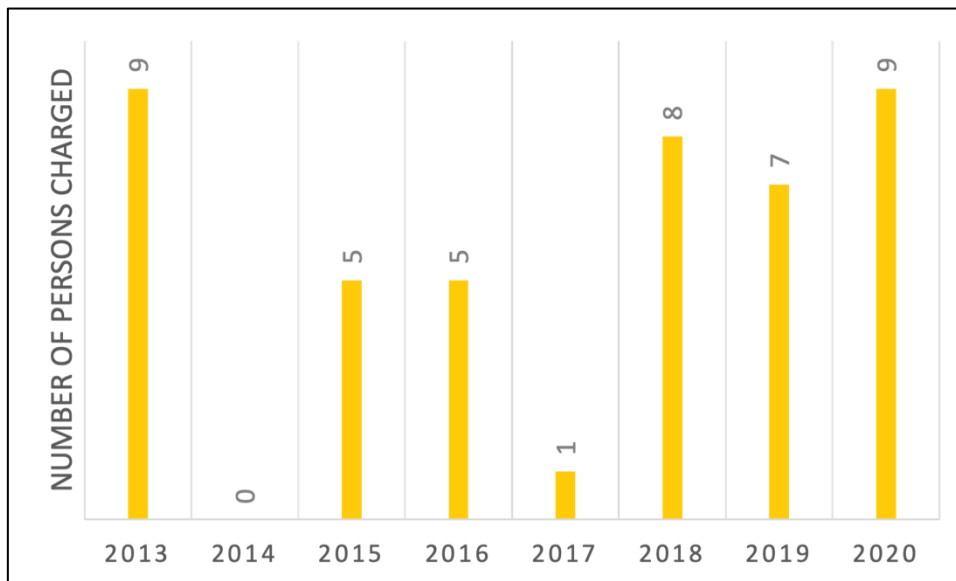
Prosecution focuses on identifying the perpetrators responsible for committing the crime of trafficking in persons and bringing them to justice. Perpetrators can be men and women, intimate partners, complete strangers to the victims, criminal organizations, business owners, peers, family members, diplomats, 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.

3.1 Arrests and Criminal Charges

The CTU received seventy-nine (79) reports of suspected cases of human trafficking, conducted thirteen (13) exercises and launched further investigations into nine (9) matters. Thirteen (13) persons were detained for questioning and nine (9) were subsequently charged with trafficking in children and other related offences; one of the accused was a Venezuelan national while the other eight were citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Since the enactment of the TIP Act in 2013, forty-four (44) 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- 2020



3.2 Status of the Court Matters (2013-2020)

Since 2013, nine accused have been committed to stand trial in the High Court, two matters were dismissed, one accused was killed in a police-involved shoot out and the others remained at the preliminary inquiry stage at the Magistrate's Court.

3.3 Charges Laid Against the Accused (2013-2020)

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. In 2020 six of the accused were charged under the Anti-Gang Act and four under the Sexual Offences Act. In previous years, some of the accused were charged under the Firearms Act and Dangerous Drugs Act. It was noted that some traffickers are involved in the drug trade and possess firearms and force their victims, to consume drugs and threaten to shoot them and their family. Table 3 shows the charges proffered against the accused over the period 2013 to 2020.

Table 3: Charges Proffered

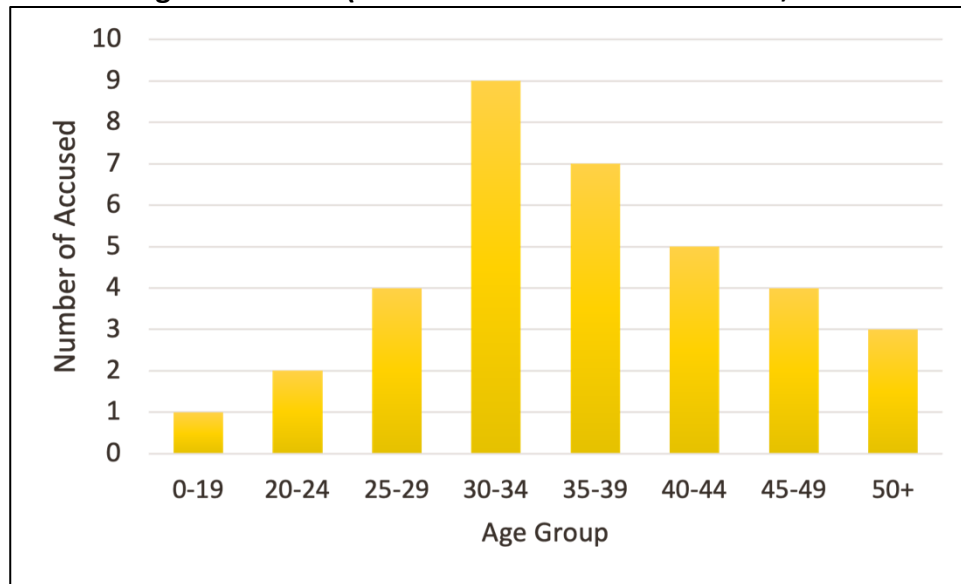
CHARGE	LEGISLATION
Receiving for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 17
Receiving for the purpose of labour exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 16
Harbouring for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 16
Transporting for the purpose of exploitation	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
Inciting a child to engage in sexual activities	Sexual Offences Act
Sexual Penetration	Sexual Offences Act Section 19
Sexual intercourse with a female without consent	Sexual Offences Act Section 4
Sexual intercourse with a minor	Sexual Offences Act
Sexual penetration of a child	Children's Act Section 18
Grievous sexual assault	Sexual Offences Act Section 4A
Rape and indecent assault	Sexual Offences Act
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 Section 22
Assisting in managing a brothel	Sexual Offences Act Section 22
Procuring a person for the purpose of prostitution	Sexual Offences Act 11:28 Section 17
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)
Counselling a Gang Leader/Gang in the commission of a Gang related activity namely trafficking in children	Anti-Gang Act section 5(1)

3.4 Profile of the Accused

The nine (9) alleged traffickers of female minors were all male with one being a Venezuelan national and the others citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. They ranged in age from twenty-six (26) to forty-nine (49).

Since 2013, forty-four (44) persons—eight females and thirty-six males, were charged for trafficking and other related offences. They ranged in age from eighteen (18) to fifty-two (52) years old.

Chart 8: *Age of Accused (based on data available for 35 accused)



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.

The Working Group comprising senior representatives of from Ministries represented on the NTFATIP and representatives from key stakeholder non-governmental organizations continued to meet virtually and collaborate to draft the National Plan of Action 2020.

The Working Committee for the delivery of care to victims of trafficking appointed by Cabinet in November 2019 had its first meeting in February 2020 and continued to meet virtually to draft a Manual for the care of victims of human trafficking.

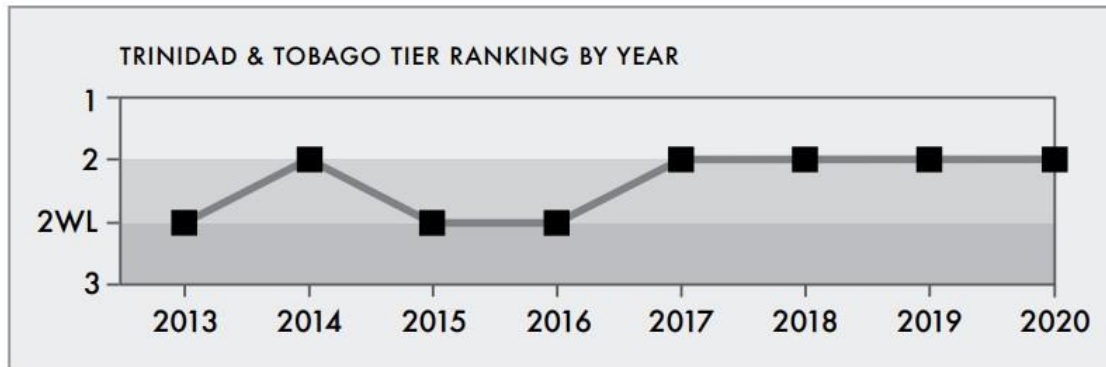
4.1 The US Department of State Annual Trafficking in Persons Report

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

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

Trinidad and Tobago remained at Tier 2 for the fourth consecutive year in 2020. The following chart shows Trinidad and Tobago's Tier ranking from 2013 to 2020.

Chart 9: Trinidad and Tobago Tier ranking (2020)



Source: USDOS TIP Report 2020

The report stated that 'The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period; therefore Trinidad and Tobago remained on Tier 2. These efforts included screening and identifying more victims, investigating traffickers, including three potentially complicit officials, prosecuting eight suspected traffickers, and increasing anti-trafficking training for its officials. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas.' The Report had the following recommendations specific for Trinidad and Tobago:

- Increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, including complicit officials and staff.
- Provide adequate funding for robust trafficking investigations and victim services, including accommodations.
- Train law enforcement and prosecutors in proactively identifying, obtaining, preserving, and corroborating evidence of trafficking.
- Increase proactive victim identification, screening, and protection among migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees so that they are not penalized for crimes traffickers compelled them to commit.
- Reduce court delays and pretrial detention and ensure that private video testimony facilities are offered to victims.
- Improve cooperation between the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU), prosecutors, judiciary, and NGOs to increase the number of cases that proceed to trial.
- Strengthen oversight, regulation, and inspections of private labor recruitment agencies and domestic work locations.
- Increase trauma-informed training on trafficking for NGO, shelter, social services, and law enforcement staff to improve their ability to identify and care for potential trafficking victims.
- Increase civil society representation on the anti-trafficking task force.
- Draft a national action plan for the period beginning 2021.

CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic raged in 2020 pushing more people into vulnerable situations as businesses closed, and restrictive control measures were instituted to mitigate the spread of the virus. Despite this, sex trafficking continued realized by four young females from Venezuela being recovered from their trafficking situation. The ongoing exploitation of minors for sex trafficking continued to be of concern as three of the victims were under eighteen (18) and one was thirteen (13) years old. A Cabinet appointed working Group continued to meet to craft a National Plan of Action to address all facets of human trafficking. Despite the virus spreading through the country, stakeholders continued to provide care for victims of human trafficking.

The government of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to the elimination of human trafficking.