



THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ANNUAL REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (2025)

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 2025.

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FOREWORD FROM THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE COUNTER-TRAFFICKING UNIT

The fight against trafficking in persons is, at its core, a fight to protect human dignity. In 2025, the Counter-Trafficking Unit continued to advance this mission through strengthened partnerships, expanded prevention efforts and a deepened commitment to victim care.

This reporting period was marked by increased collaboration with national security agencies and frontline partners, reinforcing a coordinated and intelligence-led response to trafficking in persons. Through joint operations, information sharing and strengthened institutional engagement, the national framework to identify, investigate and respond to human trafficking continued to evolve.

At the heart of this work are the victims we serve. In 2025, the Unit enhanced its victim-centered approach through strategic partnerships with international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration and the Pan American Development Foundation. These collaborations supported not only immediate care needs, but also longer-term recovery through psychosocial support, skills training and reintegration initiatives.

The Unit also expanded its prevention footprint, recognizing that awareness remains one of the most powerful tools in disrupting human trafficking. From national initiatives such as the screening of *"Silenced"* and the Schools' Sensitization Caravan, to community outreach, youth engagement, and digital campaigns reaching hundreds of thousands of persons online, the CTU continued to bring the message of awareness and vigilance to communities across Trinidad and Tobago. The national observance of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, through the production *"Traffic in the Capital"*, further underscored the importance of engaging the public in meaningful and transformative ways.

Internally, the Unit placed strong emphasis on building a resilient and cohesive team. Through training, professional development, and team-building initiatives, we continue to invest in the people who carry out this critical work, recognizing that their strength and dedication are essential to sustaining an effective national response.

The progress reflected in this report is the result of collective action. The Counter-Trafficking Unit remains committed to strengthening partnerships, enhancing victim care, and advancing prevention efforts as we continue the national fight against trafficking in persons.

Dane-Marie Marshall, LLM, MBA
Deputy Director

HUMAN TRAFFICKING – THE 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 (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 mostly considered a destination country for the trafficking of primarily women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Data collected shows that migrants are the most vulnerable to human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago. Venezuelan nationals remain the most impacted demographic. Sexual exploitation in the form of forced prostitution has been the pervading form of exploitation, with women and girls being the most exploited.

The Counter-Trafficking Unit has observed trends in traffickers utilizing technology via online social media platforms and the dark web to recruit victims and then advertise sexual services. As a result, there has been increased efforts to promote safe online spaces, and amplify public awareness drives.

Responding to Trafficking in Persons

Trafficking in persons is a criminal offence in Trinidad and Tobago and efforts to eliminate the exploitation of persons have been undertaken to eradicate this crime. The **Counter-Trafficking Unit (CTU)** was established on 11th January 2013, 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.

The CTU is a specialized, multidimensional, civilian-led agency under the Ministry of Homeland Security, responsible for the daily operations of the counter-trafficking response of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The CTU implements Government policies developed by the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NTFATIP), conducts effective identification of victims and witnesses, prevention of trafficking, protection and prosecution, all through effective partnership.

The **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 assessing the effectiveness of public awareness programmes. The National Task Force comprises participants at the ministerial level who can co-opt members of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations to develop policies and coordinate the efforts of this country's response to trafficking in persons.

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORTING 2025

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 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; and
- e) Any other pertinent matter which the Minister considers necessary.

The 2025 Annual Report on Trafficking in Persons examines Trinidad and Tobago's counter-trafficking response within the '4-P's Framework'—Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnerships. The data findings in this report may 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.

PREVENTION

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

1.1 Public Outreach

The Counter Trafficking Unit continued to lead national public outreach and sensitization initiatives aimed at preventing human trafficking, promoting early identification, and strengthening reporting mechanisms. During the calendar year 2025, activities were implemented at national, community, institutional, and youth levels.

January 22, 2025 – National Screening of “Silenced: A Short Film to Combat Human Trafficking”

On January 22, 2025, the Ministry of Homeland Security's Counter Trafficking Unit, in collaboration with Trinity Dance Theatre of Trinidad and Tobago, hosted a national screening of *“Silenced: A Short Film to Combat Human Trafficking”* at the Government Campus Plaza Auditorium, Port of Spain.

The screening brought together stakeholders from government, civil society, and the wider public and underscored Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to combating trafficking in persons through innovative partnerships and public education. The short film used dance, spoken word, and drama to humanize the realities of human trafficking and highlight the importance of collective action.

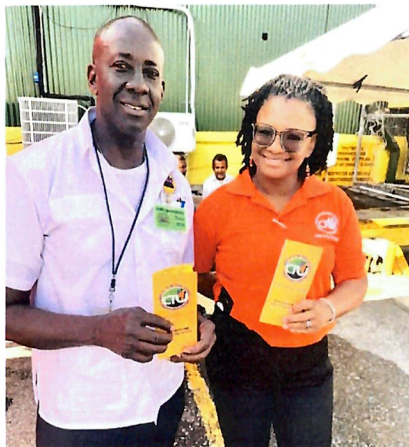
The event served not only as a national awareness initiative, but also as the official launch of a sustained youth outreach campaign, ensuring that the message extended beyond a single evening and into classrooms across the country.



January 29, 2025 – Tourism Sector Outreach (Over 200 persons engaged)

On January 29, 2025, the CTU conducted an outreach at the Cruise Ship Complex, Port of Spain, engaging over 200 tourists arriving in Trinidad, as well as maxi and taxi drivers, and tour guides.

Through the distribution of informational pamphlets outlining human trafficking indicators and reporting channels, the CTU strengthened awareness within the tourism sector during peak travel season. This initiative recognized the critical role that tourism stakeholders play in identifying and reporting suspicious activity. The engagement was supported by Tourism Trinidad Limited and reinforced the importance of vigilance within high-traffic environments.



January–February 2025 – Schools’ Sensitization Caravan (Approximately 2,322 students reached)

Following the national screening, the CTU, in partnership with Trinity Dance Theatre, launched a nationwide Schools’ Sensitization Caravan to deepen and extend the impact of *“Silenced.”*

Over the course of several weeks, the Caravan visited 11 primary and secondary schools across Trinidad, engaging approximately 2,322 students. Schools included Queen’s Royal College, Matura Secondary School, Bishop Anstey High School, Tranquility Secondary School, Mucurapo West Secondary School, Arima North Secondary School, South East Secondary School, Diego Martin North Secondary School, Brazil RC Primary School, San Rafael RC Primary School, and Curepe Presbyterian School.

At each stop, students viewed the short film and participated in guided discussions and interactive activities tailored to their age group. For primary school students, sessions focused on personal safety, recognizing warning signs, and speaking up if something feels unsafe. For secondary school students, discussions explored recruitment tactics, vulnerability factors, and how young people can protect themselves and their peers. This large-scale youth engagement initiative represented the CTU’s most expansive school-based outreach effort for 2025 and reinforced the Unit’s commitment to early prevention through education.



April 11, 2025 – Judicial Orientation Engagement

In April 2025, the Deputy Director of the CTU delivered a presentation to newly appointed Masters of the High Court as part of their official orientation programme hosted by the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago.

The session outlined the CTU's mandate and emphasized the critical role of the judiciary in ensuring human trafficking cases are handled with sensitivity, urgency, and legal precision. This engagement strengthened institutional awareness within the justice system and reinforced the importance of informed judicial leadership in securing justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators.



April 24, 2025 – School Health, Safety and Security Officers Training (35 participants)

The CTU conducted a targeted awareness and capacity-building session for 35 School Health, Safety and Security Officers from the North Eastern and South Eastern Education Districts. This initiative strengthened early detection and response protocols within schools and enhanced frontline capacity to identify and refer potential human trafficking cases.



May 2025 – YES! Leadership Programme Engagement (50 participants)

The CTU delivered an interactive human trafficking session to approximately 50 young female leaders through the Women Parliamentarians of Trinidad and Tobago's YES! Leadership Programme. Participants examined case studies and discussed human trafficking laws and victim protection, empowering them to promote awareness within their peer networks, culminating in a final mock parliamentary debate on Trafficking in Persons.



June to November 2025 – Ongoing School-Based Sensitizations (Approximately 390 students)

Throughout this period, CTU Authorized Officers conducted sensitization sessions across primary and secondary schools, reaching approximately 390 students. Sessions focused on trafficking indicators, recruitment tactics, online safety, and promotion of the national hotline 800-4CTU. Schools engaged included Coryal Secondary School, Arima Hindu School, Morvant Laventille Secondary School, Las Cuevas Primary School, and St. Joseph's Convent San Fernando. These engagements formed a core part of the Unit's prevention strategy by building awareness among children and adolescents.





July 2025 – Judicial Education Institute of Trinidad and Tobago's (JEITT) TIP Training

Director of the Counter Trafficking Unit delivered a presentation to Judges, Judicial Officers, and select court staff at the Judicial Education Institute of Trinidad and Tobago's (JEITT) TIP Training Session, focused on the Relevant Legal Frameworks and the Intersection of TIP Offences, highlighting national trends, case profiles, and key legal considerations in prosecuting trafficking in persons.



World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2025

National Observance: “Traffic in the Capital”

(Approximately 200 stakeholders in attendance)

The Counter Trafficking Unit directed the National Observance of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons at Queen’s Hall, convening approximately 200 stakeholders from government ministries and agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, diplomatic missions, and international partners.

Under the 2025 global theme, “*Human Trafficking is Organized Crime – End the Exploitation*,” the theatrical production “Traffic in the Capital” brought the realities of human trafficking to the national stage. Through dramatized real-life case scenarios and immersive creative performance, the production challenged audiences to confront the mechanisms of exploitation, identify red flags, and reaffirm collective responsibility in standing with victims.

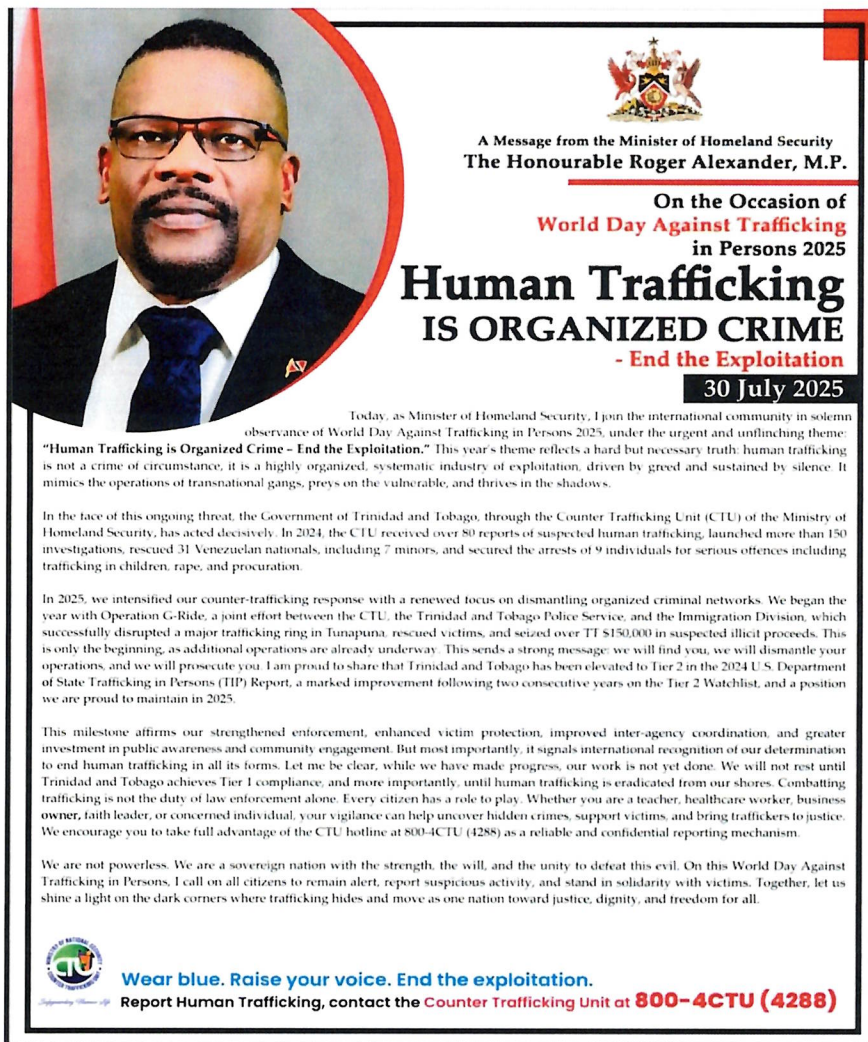
The observance also facilitated structured stakeholder engagement, cross-sector dialogue, and national media coverage, reinforcing the whole-of-government and whole-of-society response to Trafficking in Persons.



National Public Awareness Initiative: Ministerial Print Address

Separate and apart from the Queen's Hall observance, the Ministry of Homeland Security amplified the national message through a full-page public address by the Minister of Homeland Security, published in all three national daily newspapers on the occasion of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

This coordinated print campaign extended the reach of the observance beyond the event audience, delivering a direct call to action to the wider public and reinforcing the Government's commitment to combating human trafficking as organized crime.



**A Message from the Minister of Homeland Security
The Honourable Roger Alexander, M.P.**

**On the Occasion of
World Day Against Trafficking
in Persons 2025**

Human Trafficking IS ORGANIZED CRIME

- End the Exploitation
30 July 2025

Today, as Minister of Homeland Security, I join the international community in solemn observance of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2025, under the urgent and unflinching theme: **"Human Trafficking is Organized Crime - End the Exploitation."** This year's theme reflects a hard but necessary truth: human trafficking is not a crime of circumstance; it is a highly organized, systematic industry of exploitation, driven by greed and sustained by silence. It mimics the operations of transnational gangs, preys on the vulnerable, and thrives in the shadows.

In the face of this ongoing threat, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, through the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) of the Ministry of Homeland Security, has acted decisively. In 2024, the CTU received over 80 reports of suspected human trafficking, launched more than 150 investigations, rescued 31 Venezuelan nationals, including 7 minors, and secured the arrests of 9 individuals for serious offences including trafficking in children, rape, and procurement.

In 2025, we intensified our counter-trafficking response with a renewed focus on dismantling organized criminal networks. We began the year with Operation G-Ride, a joint effort between the CTU, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and the Immigration Division, which successfully disrupted a major trafficking ring in Tunapuna, rescued victims, and seized over TT \$150,000 in suspected illicit proceeds. This is only the beginning, as additional operations are already underway. This sends a strong message: we will find you, we will dismantle your operations, and we will prosecute you. I am proud to share that Trinidad and Tobago has been elevated to Tier 2 in the 2024 U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, a marked improvement following two consecutive years on the Tier 2 Watchlist, and a position we are proud to maintain in 2025.

This milestone affirms our strengthened enforcement, enhanced victim protection, improved inter-agency coordination, and greater investment in public awareness and community engagement. But most importantly, it signals international recognition of our determination to end human trafficking in all its forms. Let me be clear, while we have made progress, our work is not yet done. We will not rest until Trinidad and Tobago achieves Tier 1 compliance, and more importantly, until human trafficking is eradicated from our shores. Combatting trafficking is not the duty of law enforcement alone. Every citizen has a role to play. Whether you are a teacher, healthcare worker, business owner, faith leader, or concerned individual, your vigilance can help uncover hidden crimes, support victims, and bring traffickers to justice. We encourage you to take full advantage of the CTU hotline at 800-4CTU (4288) as a reliable and confidential reporting mechanism.

We are not powerless. We are a sovereign nation with the strength, the will, and the unity to defeat this evil. On this World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, I call on all citizens to remain alert, report suspicious activity, and stand in solidarity with victims. Together, let us shine a light on the dark corners where trafficking hides and move as one nation toward justice, dignity, and freedom for all.

 **Wear blue. Raise your voice. End the exploitation.**
Report Human Trafficking, contact the Counter Trafficking Unit at 800-4CTU (4288)

July 2025 – Community and Faith-Based Sensitization: San Rafael RC Parish (40 participants)

The CTU conducted an interactive sensitization session with approximately 40 confirmation candidates, using age-appropriate scenarios to teach warning signs and safe decision-making. The engagement strengthened outreach within faith-based communities.



July 27, 2025 – Community Awareness Installation: Cedros Stands Against Human Trafficking

In partnership with Soroptimist International Esperance, the CTU supported the unveiling of four orange benches with anti-human trafficking signage along the Cedros beachfront. This permanent installation transformed a public space into an ongoing awareness point in a community identified as vulnerable.



September 30, 2025 – National Media Sensitization Workshop

The CTU co-hosted a national media sensitization workshop with the International Organization for Migration, focused on ethical, victim-centered reporting. By engaging major media houses, this initiative strengthened responsible public messaging and expanded the reach of accurate human trafficking information nationwide.



October 2025 – National Bilingual Poster Awareness Campaign (200+ posters distributed nationwide)

The CTU launched a nationwide bilingual poster campaign, disseminating more than 200 anti-human trafficking posters across government ministries and agencies. Each poster highlighted key trafficking indicators and prominently promoted the 800-4CTU hotline, increasing everyday visibility in public-facing institutions.

STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING!

Think human trafficking doesn't happen in T&T?

Think Again!

Help STOP the buying and selling of women, men and children for sex or labour.

Have a tip? Want to get help?

CALL THE COUNTER TRAFFICKING UNIT'S TOLL-FREE HOTLINE: 800-4CTU (4288)

Look Beneath The Surface. Take Action. REPORT IT!

Counter Trafficking Unit TT | countertraffickingunit.tt | @CTU_TT | countertraffickingunit@mns.gov.tt | Call 800-4CTU (4288) | Confidential | 24/7 Hotline

¡ALTO A LA TRATA DE PERSONAS!

¿Crees que la trata de personas no ocurre en Trinidad y Tobago?

Piensa de nuevo!

Agente de la UNCTA te comparte la verdad de los casos de trata de personas.

¿Tienes algún consejo? ¿Quieres ayudar?

LLAME A LA LÍNEA DIRECTA GRATUITA DE LA UNIDAD CONTRA LA TRATA DE PERSONAS: 800-4CTU (4288)

Mira mas alla de la superficie. Tomar medidas. ¡DENUNCIALO!

Counter Trafficking Unit TT | countertraffickingunit.tt | @CTU_TT | countertraffickingunit@mns.gov.tt | Llama al 800-4CTU (4288) | Confidencial | Línea directa 24/7

October 2025 – International Day of the Girl Child Youth Advocacy Panel

The CTU participated in a national youth advocacy panel addressing human trafficking as a form of gender-based violence. The discussion promoted shared responsibility and strengthened collaboration with youth-led organizations.



November 2025 – Special training session for the Legal Aid and Advisory Authority

Led by the Director of the CTU, the session focused on human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago and how to ensure that victims are protected, not prosecuted, while traffickers are held accountable.



November 2025 – Collaborations with Soroptimist International Esperance

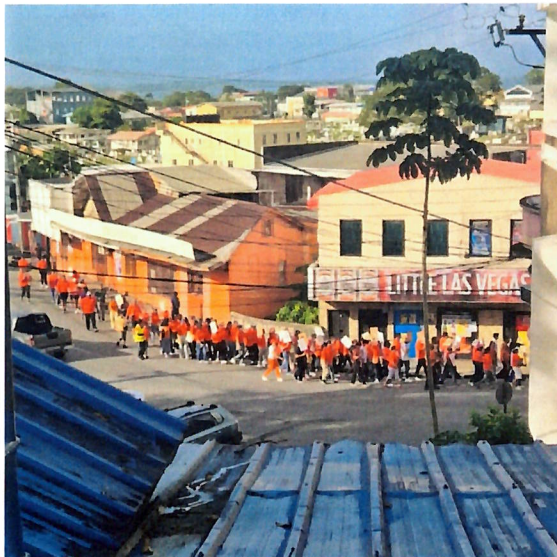
In November 2025, the Counter Trafficking Unit continued its collaboration with Soroptimist International Esperance through community-based initiatives addressing digital gender-based violence and human trafficking.

On November 29, 2025, the Deputy Director of the CTU, Ms. Dane-Marie Marshall, along with CTU officers, participated in the “Walk for Her” event in San Fernando, marking the start of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. In her remarks, Ms. Marshall highlighted the intersection between trafficking in persons and gender-based violence, with particular focus on online recruitment risks. She emphasized that a significant proportion of trafficking victims are first targeted through digital platforms, underscoring the importance of online awareness and protective measures.

The event, held under the theme “Unite to End Digital Violence Against Women,” brought together national stakeholders including the Honourable Dr. Lackram Bodee, Minister of Health; the Honourable Dr. Michael Dowlath, Minister of Education; officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Cybercrime and Social Media Unit; and representatives of the United Nations Development Programme.

Earlier in November, the CTU also supported the launch of a community-led mural project in Cedros addressing digital exploitation and trafficking. The mural transformed a public space into a visible awareness installation, reinforcing community engagement on these issues.

Through these engagements, the CTU strengthened its partnership with Soroptimist International Esperance and supported initiatives aimed at increasing public understanding of digital exploitation and its link to trafficking in persons. Members of the public were reminded that suspected cases can be reported to the national hotline at 800-4CTU.



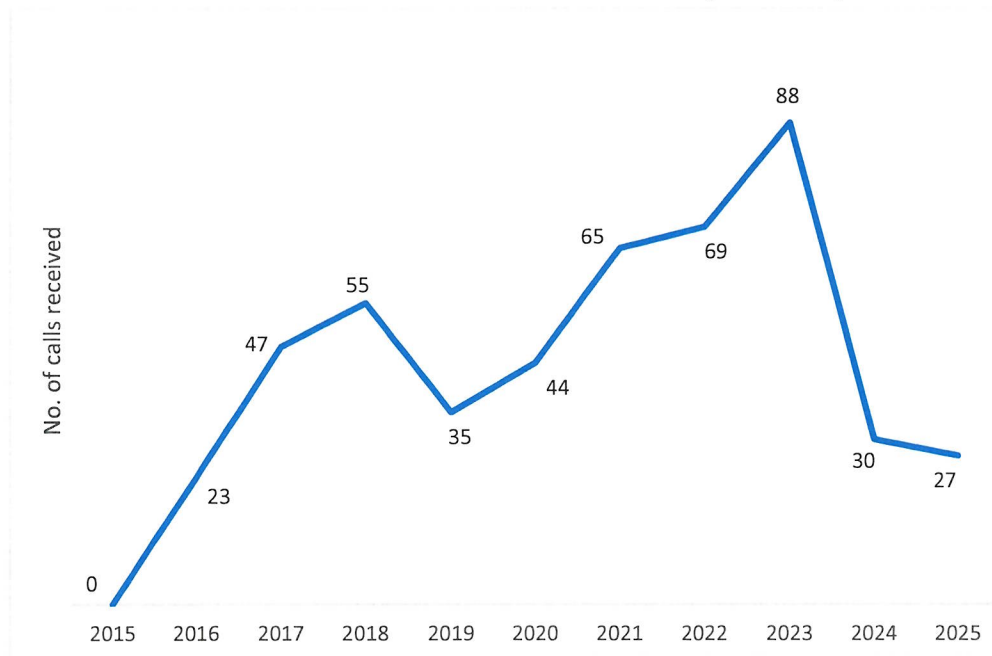


1.2 CTU Hotline 800-4CTU



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 was designed to receive tips about potential situations of human trafficking to initiate investigations by law enforcement.

In 2025, the hotline received twenty-seven (27) calls. Chart 1 shows the number of calls received since inception:

Chart 1: Number of Calls Received via Hotline (2015-2025)

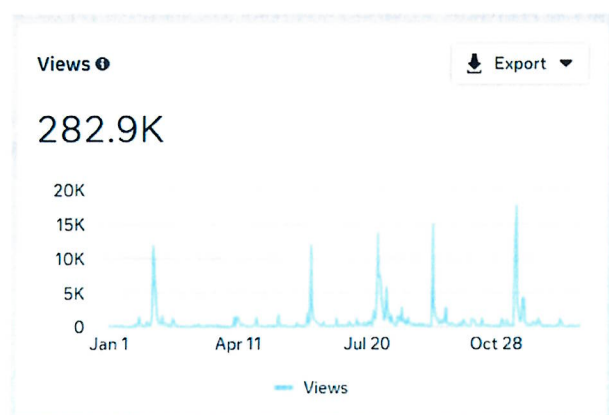
1.3 Social Media

The utilization of social media networks has become a primary means for people to engage and rapidly access and exchange information. However, the online landscape has also created new avenues for traffickers to identify, contact, and exploit victims through deceptive tactics. In response, the CTU actively maintained a presence on the following platforms:

- Facebook: Counter Trafficking Unit TT
- Twitter: @CTU_TT
- Instagram: @countertraffickingunit_tt
- YouTube: Counter Trafficking Unit TT
- Email: countertraffickingunit@mhs.gov.tt and countertraffickingunit@gmail.com

These channels serve as vital tools for sharing information on human trafficking and CTU activities. They also allow members of the public to interact with the Unit, ask questions, and submit reports.

During 2025, the CTU shared more than 150 awareness posts across its platforms, generating over 300,000 views. Content included human trafficking indicators, prevention tips, hotline promotion (800-4CTU), event coverage, and partner collaborations. This sustained digital presence strengthened national visibility, encouraged reporting, and promoted safe online behaviour.



Social Media analytics from the CTU Facebook page over the period Jan 1 - Dec 31 2025



Social Media analytics from the CTU Instagram page over the period Jan 1 - Dec 31 2025

1.4 Staff Training

In 2025, continued staff development remained a priority to ensure a professional, victim-centered national response.

April 2025 – HEARTH Trauma-Informed Care Training

The CTU partnered with La Casita Hispanic Cultural Centre to deliver HEARTH, a specialized four-day training in trauma-informed care for survivors of human trafficking and their protectors. The training equipped CTU staff with neuroscience-informed and survivor-centered techniques to strengthen victim engagement, support, and care.

The programme also strengthened inter-agency collaboration, as participants included representatives from UNHCR, the Children's Authority, St. Jude's Home for Girls, the Gender-Based Violence Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and the Caribbean Centre for Human Rights.

This initiative reinforced a trauma-informed, coordinated national response and strengthened the capacity of professionals responsible for victim identification and protection.



Participants at day 1 of the HEARTH Trauma-Informed Care Training

2. PROTECTION

Protection efforts include rescue, recognition, rehabilitation and reintegration. It starts with identifying actual and potential victims of trafficking and then providing them with suitable and adequate support.

In determining whether a case is one of trafficking in persons, investigators must examine whether the situation experienced by the individual meets the definition of trafficking in persons. The definition of human trafficking presents three (3) key elements, which must all be present to definitively identify a victim:

1. The **Action** which includes the recruiting, harbouring, transporting, providing, or obtaining of an individual.
2. The **Means** through which the action takes place including force, fraud, deception, or coercion. In cases involving children, it is not necessary to demonstrate the Means.
3. The specific **Purpose** of exploitation such as forced labour or services or commercial sex act(s) or sexual servitude.

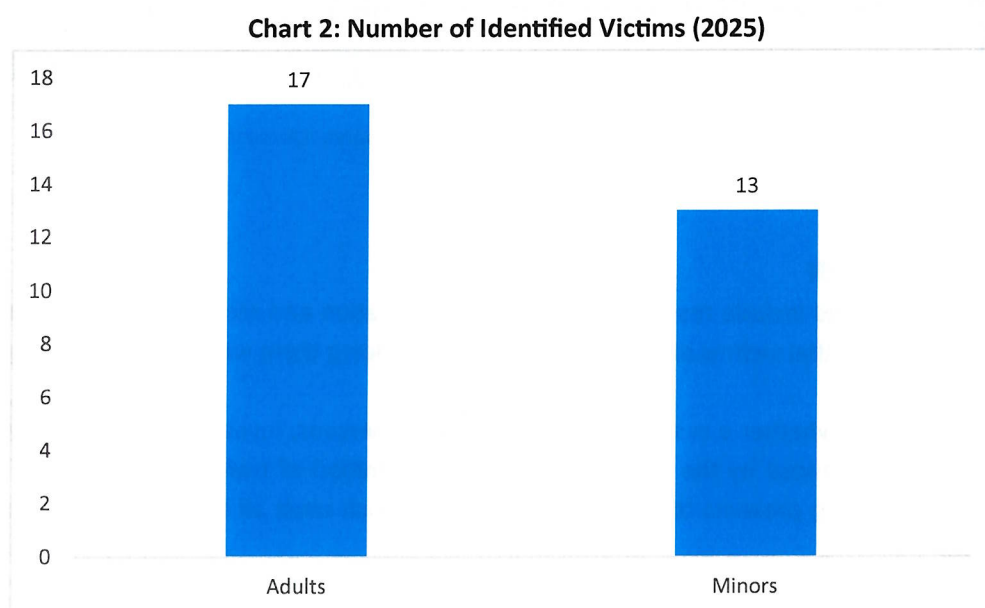
2.1 Investigations, Screening, and Identification of victims

In 2025, the CTU received ninety-six (96) reports of suspected cases of human trafficking from sources including the Immigration Division, Police Stations, Confidential Informants, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), International Organisations (IOs), Embassies and the CTU hotline. As a result, the CTU conducted thirteen (13) operations throughout the country based on the aforesaid reports and sixty-two (62) persons were found in potentially exploitative situations.

For the period, sixty-two (62) investigations were initiated by the CTU. All persons were screened for human trafficking indicators and based on further investigations, thirty (30) persons were confirmed as victims of trafficking.

2.1.1 Victim Identification

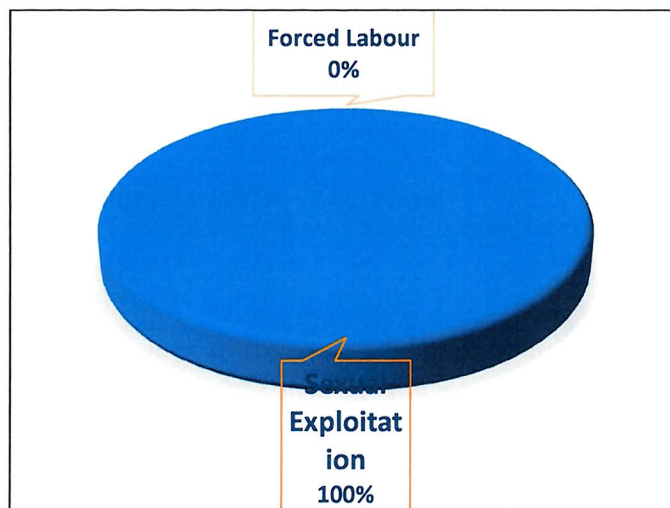
For the reporting period, one (1) Trinbagonian female and twenty-nine (29) Venezuelan females were determined to be victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. This number comprises seventeen (17) adults and thirteen (13) minors. This is shown in Chart 2:



2.1.2 Exploitation by Type and Gender

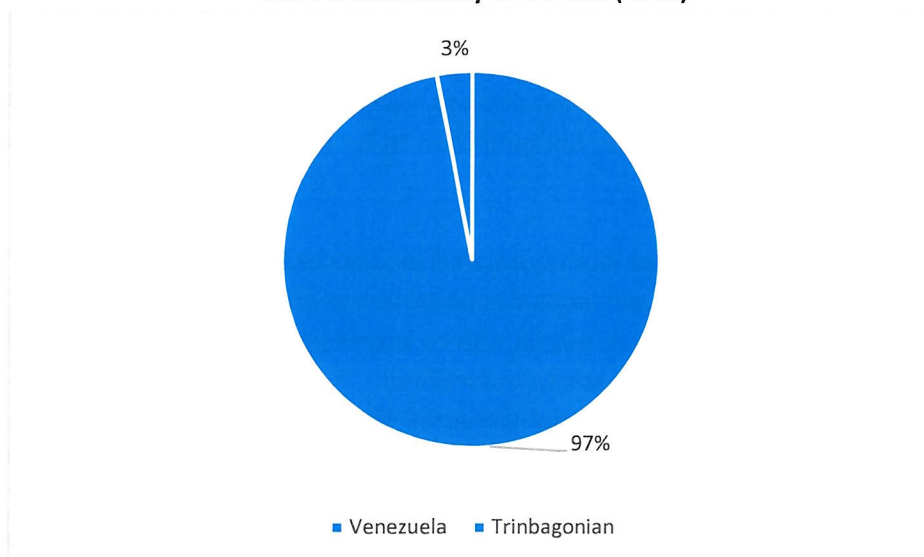
For the period under review, all thirty (30) victims were female and subjected to sexual exploitation. There were no confirmed victims of forced labour.

Chart 3 below shows the types of exploitation, by percentage, recorded for 2025:

Chart 3: Type of Exploitation (2025)

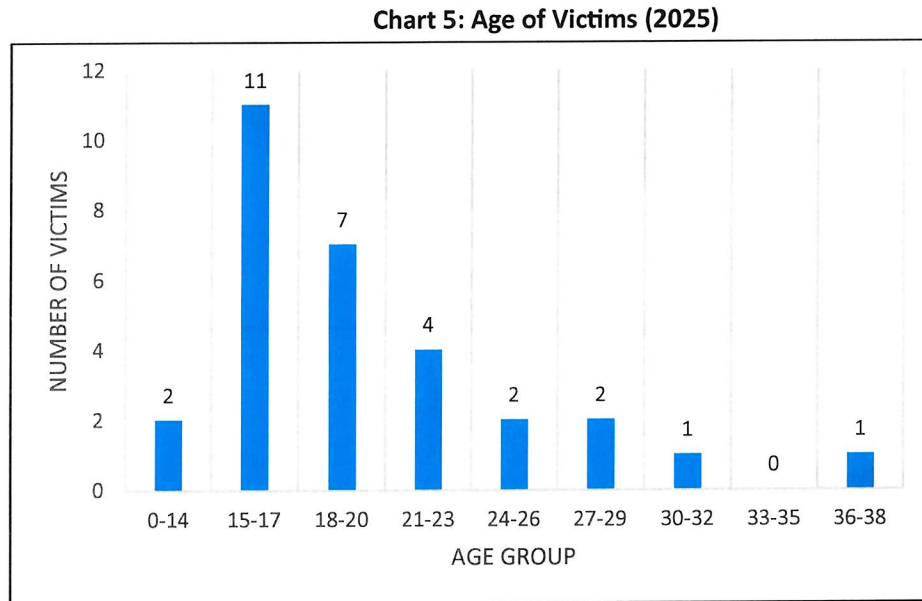
2.1.3 Nationality of Victims

Most detected victims of trafficking are foreigners in the country of detection; migrants are more vulnerable to human trafficking with the majority trafficked regionally. This trend continued to be epitomized in 2025 as ninety-seven percent (97%) of victims were of Venezuelan nationality as shown in Chart 4.

Chart 4: Nationality of Victims (2025)

2.1.4 Age of Victims

In 2025, the identified victims were aged 13 to 36-years-old. The highest number of victims, eleven (11) belonged to the 15-17-year-old category. Notably, approximately ninety-three percent (93%) of all victims were under the age of thirty (30). Chart 5 displays the ages of all victims identified by the CTU in 2025.



2.2 Assistance

Providing assistance to and protecting victims of trafficking involves safeguarding their privacy and identity, as well as addressing their physical, psychological, and social needs. Key indicators such as age, gender, nationality and the type of exploitation endured, determine the type of assistance required. 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;
- Victims of trafficking shall be given reasonable protection to prevent recapture;
- Victims shall have an opportunity to consult with an attorney-at-law or other appropriate persons or agency with respect to their rights, safety, and welfare;
- Victims who are witnesses or potential witnesses shall be eligible for witness relocation and protection if it is determined that an offence involving a crime of violence directed at the witness or possible witness is likely to be committed;
- Victims who are foreign nationals may 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 victims and their dependents, to remain and work in Trinidad and Tobago for the duration of the criminal prosecution against the traffickers; and
- 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

In 2025, the CTU continued to pursue the acquisition of other government units to be converted into victim shelters.

2.2.2 Physical and Mental Well-Being

Once identified, it is necessary to provide medical attention to victims and meet their basic personal needs including food, clothing and intimate supplies. With most victims experiencing trauma, psychological counseling is a crucial component of rehabilitation. In this regard, the IOM, the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), the Queen's Park Counselling Centre and Clinic (QPCC), the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) Victim and Witness Support Unit (VWSU) provided these services to victims and donated supplies. Further, the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago continued to play a pivotal role in providing accommodation, care, medical attention, and psychological counseling to minor victims of trafficking.

3. PROSECUTION

Human trafficking is fueled by a demand for cheap labour, services and commercial sex. Human Traffickers are those who employ force, fraud, or coercion to exploit others in their desire to profit from the existing demand. Prosecuting human traffickers is a key pillar in the fight against 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 and even friends. Thorough investigation leading to the prosecution and punishment of traffickers dismantles criminal networks, provides justice to victims and discourages further trafficking crimes.

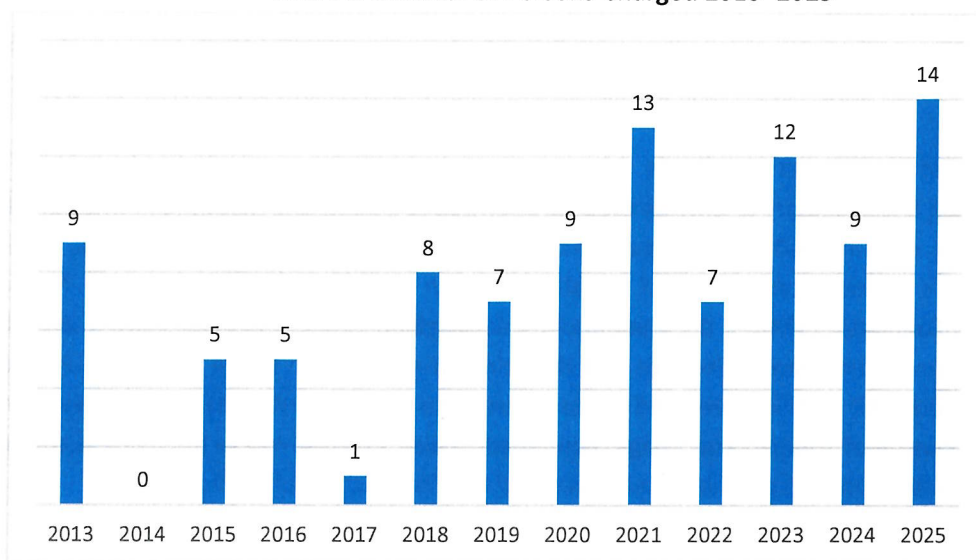
3.1 Arrests and Criminal Charges

In 2025, the CTU received ninety-six (96) reports of suspected cases of human trafficking, conducted thirteen (13) exercises throughout the country, and initiated sixty-two (62) investigations. Fourteen (14) persons were detained for questioning and all fourteen (14) persons were subsequently charged with various offences under the Trafficking in Persons Act, Chapter 12:10, Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Offences Against the Person Act, Chapter 11:08 and the Firearms Act, Chapter 16:01.

3.2 Persons Charged for Trafficking in Persons and Related Offences

Of the fourteen (14) persons charged in 2025, there were eight (8) male Trinidadians and six (6) Venezuelan Nationals; four (4) females and two (2) males. This brought the total number of persons charged for Trafficking in Persons and related offences since 2013, to ninety-nine (99). This is reflected in Chart 6 below:

Chart 6: Number of Persons Charged 2013- 2025



3.3 Status of the court matters (2013-2025)

In January 2025, Trinidad and Tobago secured its second conviction in a Trafficking in Persons matter. The accused was found guilty of trafficking three (3) Colombian women for the purpose of sexual exploitation and was sentenced to 16 years, 5 months, and 15 days in prison.

Since 2013 to present, fourteen (14) accused persons were committed to stand trial at the High Court. Eight (8) matters were dismissed, one matter was discharged and three (3) accused were killed. One (1) person pleaded guilty to immigration related offences, to wit, aiding and abetting a victim to enter the country illegally. Moreover, in 2025, all fourteen (14) persons charged appeared before Masters of the High Court where Scheduling Orders were made to progress their matters in a timely manner. All the other matters remain before the Magistrates' Court.

3.4 Charges Laid Against the Accused

While the TIP Act is the main piece of legislation to charge perpetrators for the crime of trafficking in persons and trafficking in children, the offences committed against victims may constitute a breach of other pieces of legislation including the Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28 and the Offences Against the Person Act Chapter, 11:08. The nature of the charges proffered against the accused for the period 2013-2025 is set out in Table 1 below:

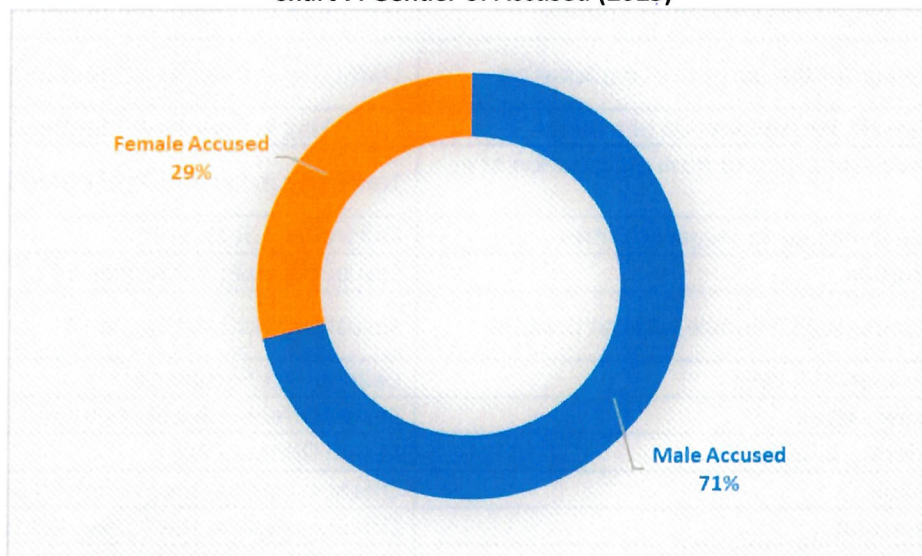
Table 1: Charges Proffered

CHARGE	LEGISLATION
Receiving for the purpose of exploitation	Trafficking in Persons Act Section 16
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	Children Act Section 14
Sexual Penetration	Sexual Offences Act Section 18
Sexual intercourse with a female without consent	Sexual Offences Act Section 4
Sexual penetration of a child	Children Act Section 18
Grievous sexual assault	Sexual Offences Act Section 4A
Rape and indecent assault	Sexual Offences Act
Common assault	Offences Against the Person Act Section 30
Choking with intent	Offences Against the Person Act Section 15
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 Act Section 9 (2)
Possession of a 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)

3.5 Profile of the Accused: Gender, Nationality and Age

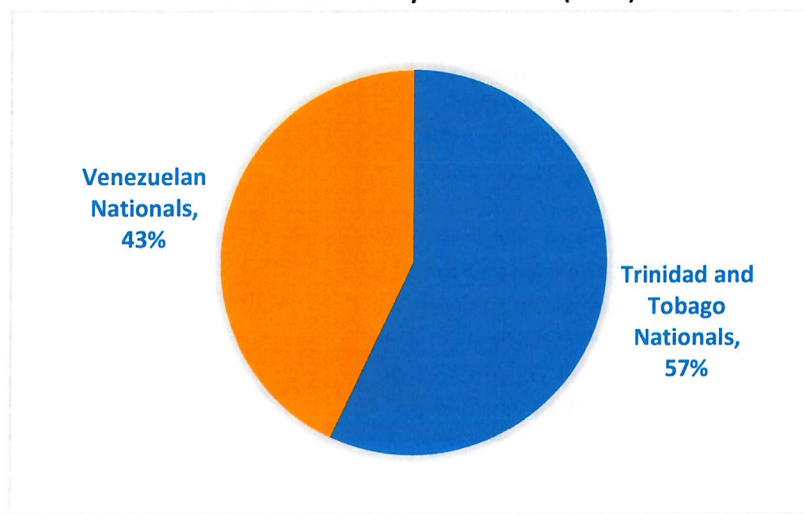
In 2025, fourteen (14) persons – ten (10) men and four (4) women were charged for trafficking in persons and other related offences. Males accounted for seventy-one (71%) of the accused while females represented twenty-nine percent (29%) . This is illustrated in Chart 7 below: -

Chart 7: Gender of Accused (2025)



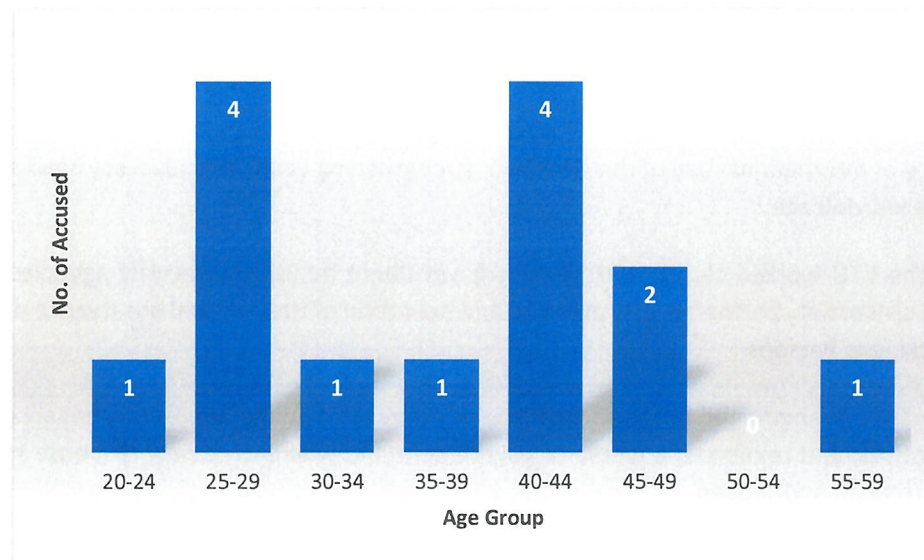
Of the fourteen (14) persons charged in 2025, forty-three percent (43%) or six (6) accused were nationals of Venezuela and fifty-seven percent (57%) or eight (8) accused were citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. This is reflected in Chart 8 below: -

Chart 8: Nationality of Accused (2025)



In 2025, the accused persons' ages ranged from twenty-one (21) to fifty-seven (57) yearsold. The data shows that in this reporting period, the highest number of accused persons were in the 25-29 and 40-44 age categories. In this regard, see Chart 9 below: -

Chart 9: Age of Accused (2024)



4. PARTNERSHIPS

Cooperation among and between governmental, non-governmental, regional, and international organizations remained imperative in advancing the fight against human trafficking. Throughout 2025, the Counter-Trafficking Unit continued to strengthen existing relationships and expand collaborative efforts to support prevention, protection, and public awareness initiatives.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) remained a key strategic partner, collaborating with the CTU on the National Media Sensitization Workshop aimed at promoting ethical and victim-centered reporting. IOM also partnered in survivor-focused initiatives, including support to empowerment programmes that highlighted recovery and reintegration pathways.

La Casita Hispanic Cultural Centre partnered with the CTU to deliver the HEARTH Trauma-Informed Care Training in April 2025. This collaboration strengthened inter-agency capacity and reinforced a coordinated, survivor-centered national response.

The Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), with support from the Government of the United States of America, partnered with the CTU to facilitate skills-based cosmetology training for migrant women, including victims of trafficking. This initiative supported employability, dignity, and economic reintegration.

Soroptimist International Esperance collaborated with the CTU on community-based awareness initiatives in Cedros, including the installation of permanent anti-human trafficking public awareness benches along the beachfront. This partnership strengthened grassroots prevention efforts in a community identified as vulnerable.

The Women Parliamentarians of Trinidad and Tobago partnered with the CTU through the YES! Leadership Programme, creating a platform to educate and empower young female leaders on trafficking prevention and advocacy.

The Trinidad and Tobago Youth Advocacy Network engaged the CTU in national youth discussions during the observance of International Day of the Girl Child, strengthening youth-led advocacy against trafficking and gender-based violence.

Additionally, the CTU worked closely with various government ministries, security agencies, corporate sponsors, and civil society partners in the planning and execution of the national observance of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

These partnerships strengthened national coordination, expanded public awareness, enhanced survivor-centered initiatives, and reinforced a whole-of-government and whole-of-society response to trafficking in persons in Trinidad and Tobago.

The United States Department of State (USDOS) Annual Trafficking in Persons Report

The Trafficking in Persons 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:

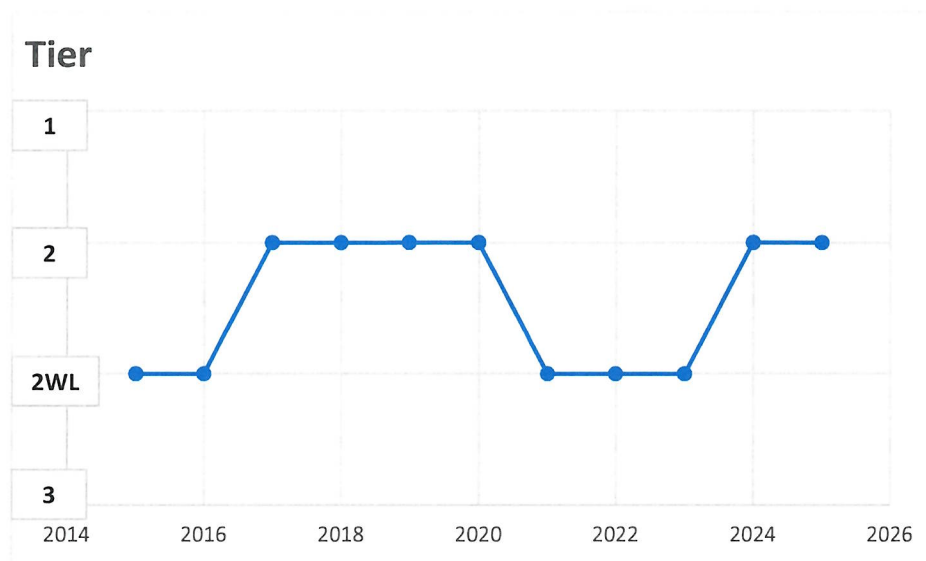
Tier 1:	Countries whose governments fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards
Tier 2:	Countries whose governments do not fully comply with all of TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.
Tier 2 Watchlist:	Countries whose 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: ▪ 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.

In the 2025 USDOS Trafficking in Persons Report, the country maintained a Tier 2 ranking.

It was reported that *“The Government of Trinidad and Tobago does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared with the previous reporting period; therefore, Trinidad and Tobago remained on Tier 2. These efforts included increasing investigations and prosecutions, identifying more victims, and convicting a complicit police officer – the second conviction under the trafficking law since its enactment in 2011. The government made progress towards the operationalization of three new specialized shelters. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. The government significantly reduced funding for prevention and victim protection efforts. Due to inadequate screening efforts, the government did not take effective measures to prevent the inappropriate penalization of potential victims solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked. Corruption and official complicity continued to impede anti-trafficking efforts. Only two of the government’s five specialized shelters were operational during the reporting period and evidence collection for trafficking investigations remained a significant weakness, inhibiting law enforcement efforts.”*

Chart 10 shows the ranking of Trinidad and Tobago from 2015 to 2025.

Chart 10: Tier Ranking for Trinidad and Tobago (2015 – 2025)



Notwithstanding, in the aforesaid report, it was also reported that *“The Government of Trinidad and Tobago does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared with the previous reporting period; therefore, Trinidad and Tobago remained on Tier 2.”*

The recommendations offered by the State Department include:

- Continue to increase efforts to investigate and prosecute traffickers, including allegedly complicit officials, and seek adequate penalties for convicted traffickers, which should involve significant prison terms.
- Increase proactive victim identification, screening, and protection among vulnerable communities, including children in children's homes and schools; Venezuelan nationals working in Chinese national-owned spas; Cuban regime-affiliated workers; and other migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees, the majority of whom are Venezuelans.
- Increase the availability of protection services – including dedicated short-term shelters and long-term housing – for all trafficking victims, including male child victims.
- Improve evidence collection; the quality of prosecutions; and cooperation between the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU), prosecutors, the judiciary, other agencies, and NGOs to increase the number of cases that proceed to trial.
- Ensure safety and access for international organization (IO) and NGO representatives and increase the CTU's engagement with these organizations.
- Ensure victims are not inappropriately penalized solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked.
- Continue to reduce judicial backlog.
- Reduce vulnerability to trafficking by implementing the pilot program to allow registered migrant children to attend school and expand that program to include all those registered.
- Improve the quality and consistency of victim care and increase bilingual services.
- Strengthen oversight, regulation, and inspections of private labor recruitment agencies and domestic work locations.
- Investigate and prosecute domestic child trafficking as human trafficking and not as abuse or other crimes.
- Improve supervision of those on trial or out on bail.
- Fully implement and continue to train officials and NGOs on the use of new SOPs for victim care and referral.

CONCLUSION

Trafficking in Persons continues to pose a serious threat to human dignity, public safety and the rule of law. During the 2025 reporting period, Trinidad and Tobago sustained its national response through the coordinated efforts of the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) and its partners under the 4-P framework of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnerships.

In the area of prevention, the CTU expanded its public education footprint through a wide range of initiatives targeting youth, communities, frontline professionals, media practitioners and the wider public. These included the national screening of *Silenced*, the Schools' Sensitization Caravan, targeted school

engagements, sector-specific outreach, the national observance of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons through *Traffic in the Capital*, public awareness installations in Cedros, a bilingual poster campaign, and sustained social media engagement which generated significant national reach. These efforts reinforced awareness of trafficking indicators, encouraged early reporting, and promoted the national hotline 800-4CTU.

With respect to protection, the CTU continued to identify, screen and assist persons found in potentially exploitative situations, while working to ensure that victims received trauma-informed, victim-centred care. Strategic partnerships with agencies such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, Queen's Park Counselling Centre and Clinic, and other service providers supported accommodation, counselling, medical care, reintegration support, and other essential services. Continued efforts to secure additional shelter capacity also reflected the Government's commitment to strengthening victim assistance mechanisms.

In the area of prosecution, the CTU continued to receive reports, initiate investigations, conduct operations, and pursue criminal accountability for traffickers and related offenders. While human trafficking matters are often complex and resource-intensive, the continued progression of cases before the courts and the laying of charges demonstrate ongoing commitment to justice, deterrence, and the protection of vulnerable persons.

Partnerships remained central to the national response. Throughout 2025, the CTU strengthened collaboration with local and international stakeholders including law enforcement agencies, ministries, non-governmental organizations, diplomatic missions and international bodies. These partnerships enhanced operational coordination, supported victim services, broadened prevention outreach, and reinforced a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to combating trafficking in persons.

Trinidad and Tobago's continued Tier 2 ranking in the 2025 United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report reflects both the progress made and the work that remains. The recommendations outlined therein provide useful guidance as the country continues to improve victim identification, protection services, investigations, prosecutions and inter-agency coordination.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago remains resolute in its commitment to eliminating trafficking in persons. Through sustained leadership, stronger partnerships, professional capacity building, and continued public vigilance, the country will continue to strengthen its response and safeguard the rights and dignity of all persons.