



Migration
Multi-Partner
Trust Fund

SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT

**AN ANALYSIS OF
THE VICTIM CARE
ENVIRONMENT TO
SUPPORT SURVIVORS
OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING
IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO**

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LIST OF
ACRONYMS AND
ABBREVIATIONS

Access Support and Coordination Programme	ASC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	IFRC
Archdiocesan Ministry of Migrants and Refugees	AMMR	International Labour Organization	ILO
Beneficiary Needs Assessment	BNA	International Organization for Migration	IOM
CARICOM Implementation Agency on Crime and Security	CARICOM Impacs	Labour Inspectorate Unit	LIU
Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago	CATT	Living Water Community	LWC
Child Protection Unit	CPU	Memorandum of Understanding	MoU
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	CEDAW	Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs	
Convention on the Rights of the Child	CRC	Ministry of Health	MoH
Counter-Trafficking Unit	CTU	Ministry of Labour	MoL
Director of Public Prosecutions	DDP	Ministry of National Security	MNS
Displacement Tracking Matrix	DTM	Ministry of Social Development and Family Services	MSDFS
Families in Action	FIA	Migration Multi Partner Trust Fund	MMPTF
Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago	FPATT	National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons	NTFATIP
Gender-Based Violence	GBV	Non-Governmental Organizations	NGOs
Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago	GoRTT	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	PTSD
Human Immunodeficiency Virus	HIV	Safeguarding and Rescuing All Humans from Trafficking	S.A.R.A.H
Inter-American Development Bank	IADB	Sexually Transmitted Diseases	STDs
International Criminal Police Organization	Interpol	Sexually Transmitted Infections	STIs
		Standard Operating Procedures	SOPs
		Sustainable Development Goals	SDGs
		Trafficking in Persons	TiP

Trinidad and Tobago Police Service	TTPS	United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA
Unaccompanied and Separated Children	UASC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	UNODC
United Nations	UN	United States dollar	USD
United Nations Children's Fund	UNICEF	Victims of Trafficking	VoTs
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR	Vocational Training Assessment	VTA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The significant evolution of human trafficking, over time, has been propelled by an increasing demand for victims, who are vulnerable to “push” factors, which thrust them into situations of exploitation and abuse. The huge profits generated from these schemes are also well documented, although the true magnitude of operations remains unknown. Therefore, cognizant of the escalating threat of human trafficking, this phenomenon has been integrated into the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under different goals and

targets, as well as the Global Compact for Migration within the context of international migration.

The twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, similarly, has grappled with emerging trends of Trafficking in Persons, which culminated in the development of national anti-trafficking legislation in 2011, and associated mechanisms, to manage counter-trafficking activities. The increasing flows of Venezuelan migrants and refugees into the country, coupled with the rising number of trafficking cases, have prompted greater pressure for protection systems to attend to increasing vulnerability

to abuse, violence and exploitation, particularly amongst women and girls. This has resulted in a greater need for services, support systems and increased technical capacities among national authorities and community-based actors, to which the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Population Fund, and the United Nations Children Fund responded with a Joint Programme entitled “Access, Support and Coordination (ASC)”, funded by the Migration Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). The Joint Programme intends to transform support systems for victims and survivors of trafficking by making it more cohesive, all-inclusive and well-coordinated.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

There exist a dearth of research and evidence-based material on the counter-trafficking structures within Trinidad and Tobago, resulting in limited knowledge and understanding of the dynamics and operational features of the complexities and nuances of the trafficking phenomenon. Deeper understanding of the situation will inform better planning, programme development, service delivery and capacity building to prevent and eradicate trafficking in persons more effectively. Accordingly, this assessment will attempt to provide some rich insights to close this information gap and strengthen national counter-trafficking efforts.

**METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION
AND ANALYSIS**

The research team employed desk research and qualitative methods in keeping with the goals and outcomes of the Joint Programme.

Therefore, the fieldwork goals of the Assessment were to:

- a. Identify the current situation of trafficking in persons in Trinidad and Tobago;
- b. Indicate key systems and structures that support assistance efforts to victims of trafficking;
- c. Examine the main strengths and gaps of existing assistance services to victims of trafficking;
- d. Understand the needs of both the stakeholders who assist victims of trafficking, as well as the victims of trafficking themselves; and
- e. Propose recommendations for improving assistance efforts to victims of trafficking.

In keeping with the qualitative design, the assessment purposively targeted key stakeholders in government, non-government organizations and international organizations who provide assistance and services to victims of trafficking and data was collected through

semi-structed interviews. Victims of trafficking were also interviewed to gain a greater understanding of their circumstances.

Accordingly, interviews with key stakeholders focused on, inter alia, the situation of trafficking in persons, available services for victims of trafficking, resource needs, referral systems and collaboration efforts. Whereas interviews with the victims of trafficking emphasized rights and welfare, as well as their needs and services required.

From February to March 2022, data was collected with 30 key stakeholders from government, non-governmental organizations, international organizations (see Appendix A) and 15 victims of trafficking . Thereafter, the data collected was transcribed and analysed through content and thematic analysis.

This report details the perspectives and responses shared by the 45 respondents during the assessment, as well as supporting information sourced from the literature.

RESULTS AND KEY FINDINGS

Analysis of the interviews generated the following key findings within the undermentioned themes:

THE TRAFFICKING SITUATION

- Human trafficking is considered a formidable matter for Trinidad and Tobago.
- Trinidad and Tobago is primarily a destination and transit country for human trafficking and may be a source country.
- Human trafficking schemes are intricately organized, networked criminal enterprises, with experienced operations in both Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago.

RECRUITMENT AND ENTRY POINTS

- Main methods of recruitment include social media, such as WhatsApp and Facebook.
 - Secondary methods include newspaper advertisements.
- Irregular entry points, via sea, have expanded beyond the traditional southern and southwestern peninsular options to include any unmanned area along the island’s coastline.

TYPE OF EXPLOITATION

- Sexual exploitation emerged as the most prevalent form of exploitation. Labour exploitation was also identified to a lesser degree.

IMPACT OF COVID-19

- The COVID-19 pandemic heightened migrants’ vulnerability to trafficking as it resulted in some cases of:
 - Declined income and loss of livelihood;
 - Decreased access to shelters;
 - Increased health issues along with reduced health care options; and
 - Limited assistance options inclusive of mental health services.

PREVENTION

- Prevention efforts were generally perceived as inadequate.

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

- The Trafficking in Persons legislation was perceived as ‘good’, however, its efficacy relied on proper execution and enforcement.
- Institutional arrangements for counter-trafficking require enhancement.
 - Key policies not yet developed such as the migration, anti-smuggling, and labour migration policies,
 - Absence of Standard Operating Procedures for the treatment of VoTs; and
 - Ad hoc approach to investigations and prosecution.

VICTIM NEEDS

- Urgent victim needs include shelter, medical/health care, psychological support, education and training, legal assistance, protection/safety, employment, translation, information, re-integration, freedom, and documentation.

CHALLENGES FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Major challenges to the provision of services include shortage of professional staff, unclear and unstructured referral mechanisms, victim safety concerns, victims’ lack of trust in authorities, inadequate placement facilities for children, and absence of:

- Legal guardianship for child victims of trafficking
- Identification documents for some victims of trafficking ;and
- Standard Operating Procedures for assisting victims of trafficking.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIONS

The main recommendations, emerging from the respondents on improving assistance efforts for victims of trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago, included:

Strengthen and/or Develop Legislative and Policy Frameworks to effectively support Migration and Anti-Trafficking in Persons

- Review, update and bolster the Trafficking in Persons Act.

- Develop migration, labour migration and anti-smuggling policies.

- Create a specific policy for victims of trafficking.

IMPLEMENT AN OVERARCHING
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

- Fund, and implement the anti-trafficking National Action Plan for 2021-2025.

ENHANCE THE CAPACITIES OF THE
INVESTIGATIVE AND PROSECUTORIAL
ARM

- Increase proactive victim identification and screening within vulnerable communities.

- Intensify Trafficking in Persons investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of traffickers including complicit officials and staff.

- Enhance the capacity of law enforcement and prosecuting authorities to identify and prosecute the crime.

- Explore an integrated database between/ among key stakeholder agencies to facilitate

the rapid identification of known traffickers and smugglers.

- Address indicated training needs of service providers and key stakeholders.

- Improve public confidence in authorities to improve trafficking in persons reporting.

- Reinforce victims’ trust in local systems.

FACILITATE COLLABORATIVE AND
COOPERATIVE MECHANISMS

- Strengthen interagency relationships to support identification, screening, and referral processes, outreach to victims, and address supply chain issues.

- Develop a comprehensive National Trafficking Victim Service Provider Referral List.

- Create and implement Standard Operating Procedures and shared terminologies for collaborating agencies and define agencies’ core roles and responsibilities to victims and to the partnerships.

- Formalize interagency human-trafficking support network.

EXPAND PREVENTION
AND SENSITIZATION

- Pursue and sustain prevention efforts that are focused on both the demand side of trafficking in persons i.e., demand for sex, forced labour, and free labour, as well as the supply side, which relates to effective border management.

- Heighten public sensitization on trafficking in persons.

PRIORITIZE VICTIMS NEEDS

- Ensure the safety needs of victims are protected and that they are not criminalized.

- Extend access to education and decent employment to victims of trafficking.

- Provide adequate housing for victims of trafficking.

- Increase the availability of bilingual services to victims of trafficking.

**PROMOTE RESEARCH AND
EVIDENCE-BASED INITIATIVES**

- Collect, analyze and use trafficking in persons data to inform trafficking in persons activities.
- Conduct studies in the prevalence of trafficking and victim attrition levels.

**INCREASE EFFORTS IN TRAINING
AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

- Provide Basic, advanced and refresher courses in key areas such as safety, protection, victim identification, case management, trauma informed care, data collection, analysis and management, to improve service delivery to victims of trafficking.

The report also recognized upcoming trafficking in persons initiatives, which would complement existing efforts. Nonetheless, it concludes that despite the efforts of service providers and the availability of victim of trafficking services in Trinidad and Tobago, there is room for improvement and growth particularly in the areas of policy development, harmonization of legislation, strengthened capacity for stakeholders and expansion of some services.

INTRODUCTION

I



I. INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking, trafficking in persons (TiP) or modern slavery, is regarded as an ‘old problem’¹ that has evolved significantly since the mid-1980s, due to push factors² for the victims; increased demand³ and particular global events.⁴ It , has emerged as a global threat, with devastating physical, mental, social, and health effects for the victims and societies⁵ Furthermore, given this phenomenon’s complex interlinkages with inequality and the denial of human dignity, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has recognized its erosive impacts on human development.

More pointedly, Goal 5, target 5.2, of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seeks to “eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and

other types of exploitation”.⁶ Similarly, Goal 8, target 8.7, advocates for “immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour; end modern slavery and human trafficking, and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.”⁷

Additionally, Goal 16, target 16.2, promotes ending “abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children.”⁸ Other SDGs also address facilitating factors of TiP and exploitation such as poverty (Goal 1), inequality (Goal 10), and inequitable quality education (Goal 4).

Similarly, Objective 10 of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) aims to “prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons

1. (Shelley 2010)
2. Major push factors for victims included: poverty, social injustice, disasters, substance abuse, family breakdown, and homelessness (Cho 2015; Okech et al. 2018; Wolfe et al. 2018)
3. (Shelley2010)
4. Global events refer to globalization, the rise of illicit trade and the end of the Cold War.
5. Macias-Konstantopoulos 2017) and (Powell et al. 2017)

6. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>
7. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>
8. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>

in the context of international migration⁹.” Accordingly, the United Nations seek to “take legislative or other measures to prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration by strengthening capacities and international cooperation to investigate, prosecute and penalize trafficking in persons, discouraging demand that fosters exploitation leading to trafficking, and ending impunity of trafficking networks¹⁰.”

Evidence suggests that “trafficked migrants represent a small share of the 281 million international migrants in 2020.”¹¹ The International Labour Organization’s (ILO) global estimates also indicated that there are

24.9 million victims of forced labour, of which 20.1 million are subjected to forced labour, and 4.1 are victims of sexual exploitation.¹² However, the number of unknown or non-detected victims, i.e. the dark figure of TiP may surpass detected victims due to challenges and inconsistencies across data collection systems.¹³

I.1 Global Situation – Trafficking in Persons

Based on global data on TiP, there have been fluctuations in the recorded number of identified victims of human trafficking between 2014 and 2021, with a noticeable reduction from 2020 to 2021, as highlighted in figure 2.

Figure 2: Global Law Enforcement Data on Trafficking in Persons

Year	Prosecutions	Convictions	Victims Identified
2015	19,127 (857)	6,615 (456)	77,823 (14,262)
2016	14,939 (1,038)	9,072 (717)	68,453 (17,465)
2017	17,471 (869)	7,135 (332)	96,960 (23,906)
2018	11,096 (457)	7,481 (259)	85,613 (11,009)
2019	11,841 (1,024)	9,548 (498)	118,932 (13,875)
2020	9,876 (1,115)	5,011 (337)	109,216 (14,448)
2021	10,572 (1,379)	5,260 (374)	90,354 (21,219)

Source: Adapted, Trafficking in Persons Report 2022¹⁴

9. (UN 2019)
10. (UN 2019)
11. (IOM 2021)
12..(ILO 2017: 10)
13. (UNODC 2022)

14. The report covers the reporting period of April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021. It is based on government efforts in approximately 187 countries. The figures in parentheses represent labour trafficking.

However, as previously indicated, the hidden victims are not always reflected in statistical reporting.

Further to this, the COVID-19 pandemic compounded the complexity of this phenomenon, and mitigation measures to stave off the worst impacts of the virus inadvertently heightened the vulnerability of ‘at risk’ persons to trafficking schemes. However, it also resulted in less detection of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation.¹⁵

More specifically, reduced economic activities curtailed migrants’ employment options, border closures boosted the market for irregular entry channels, and anti-trafficking resources that supported victim identification, protection, service provision, and TiP preventative efforts were re-directed into pandemic responses.¹⁶ Additionally, law enforcement was constrained, and trafficking was potentially pushed further underground. Consequently, there was also a global slowdown in convictions during that period.¹⁷

However, TiP has been described as the world’s fastest growing criminal enterprise,¹⁸ with profits amounting to United States dollar (USD) 150 billion annually, for forced labour alone.¹⁹

Further to this, undocumented migrants, marginalized persons, and individuals in desperate need of employment, are particularly susceptible to human trafficking,²⁰ with girls and women being disproportionately affected.²¹

The true magnitude of human trafficking, however, remains unknown, as “the clandestine nature of human trafficking constitutes one of the main impediments to collecting accurate data on profits generated and the scope of trafficking worldwide.”²² Consequently, this could result in underestimations of the number of trafficking victims, especially within the informal sector.²³

15. (UNODC 2022)
16. (IOM 2021); (US Department of State 2022)
17. (UNODC 2022)
18. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2017/07/29/the-worlds-fastest-growing-crime/?sh=6eeb16633aae>

19. (ILO 2014)
20. (UNODC 2020a: 9)
21. (UNODC 2020a)
22. (IOM 2021: 262)
23. (Grant et al. 2018: 57)

1.2
Purpose of Assessment

This assessment will focus on the trafficking situation within the twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, which has witnessed an emerging trend in TiP. Within the last few years, flows of Venezuelan migrants and refugees into the country have significantly increased along with the surge in trafficking cases, and greater demand for protection efforts to address heightened risk levels of abuse, violence and exploitation, particularly amongst women and girls. This need for strengthened support systems and improvements in technical capacities among national authorities and community-based systems led to the development of a Joint Programme, “Access, Support and Coordination (ASC)”, to enhance these efforts and more effectively respond to the needs of victims of trafficking. The Joint Programme is facilitated through the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Children

24. Migration MPTF Concept Note, April 2020

Fund (UNICEF) under the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). Accordingly, its overarching outcome is a more comprehensive, integrated, and well-coordinated protection and support system for victims and survivors of trafficking.²⁴

However, the trafficking landscape in Trinidad and Tobago is characterized by very little research and evidence-based efforts that have systematically explored the effectiveness of its counter-trafficking structures and, more pointedly, assessed support systems for victims of trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago.

Accordingly, to deepen understanding of the trafficking in persons situation within Trinidad and Tobago, this assessment was designed to explore its dimensions, systems and operational features to guide planning, programming and capacity building efforts among these agencies and national authorities in preventing and combatting trafficking in persons towards greater achievement of national and international goals.

1.3
Definition of Trafficking in Persons

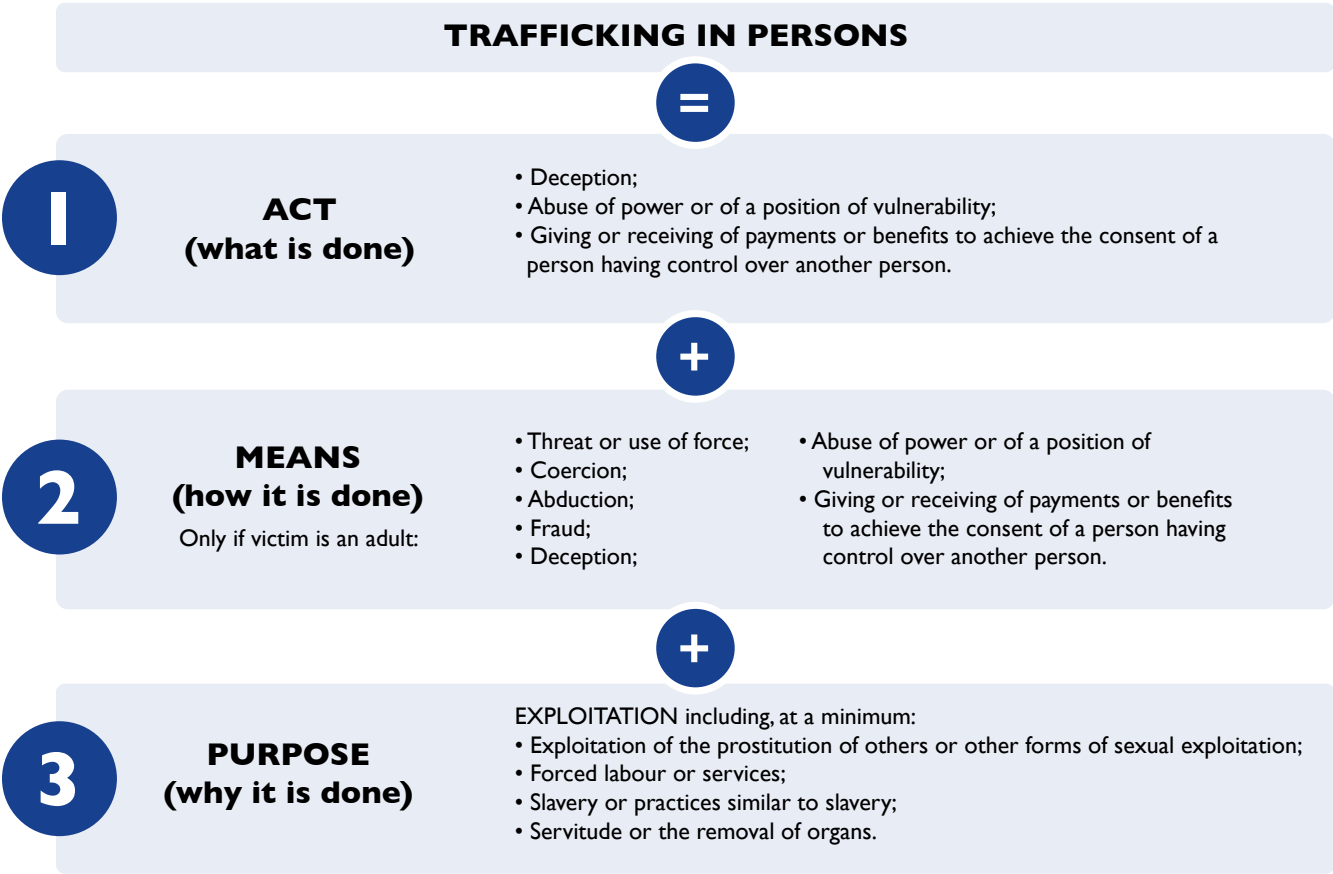
For the purpose of this assessment, the definition of Trafficking is in keeping with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000, which established that trafficking in persons entails:

“The recruitment, transportation, transfer,

harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of 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 ²⁵”²⁶

IOM (2022) further dissected this definition into three constituent parts, namely the act, the means, and the purpose, as depicted in figure 1.

Figure 1: Core Elements of Trafficking in Persons



Source: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/WMR-2022_0.pdf

In cases of child trafficking, “the “means” element is not required to establish that the trafficking crime has been committed.²⁷”

1.4
Structure of Report

This Situation Assessment Report contains six chapters commencing with the Introduction, which outlines the background context and purpose of the research. It also provides a definition of trafficking and the global situation. The second chapter, Methodology, details the methodological approach adopted in the assessment, focusing on the fieldwork goals and strategy, sampling, target population, data collection, analysis, and limitations. Chapter three examines some key aspects of the literature relevant to the assessment, including looking at victim’s needs, service providers needs and challenges, the impact of covid-19,

as well as the local legislative, policy and institutional framework for trafficking in persons in Trinidad and Tobago. Chapter four reveals the findings that emerged from the assessment in keeping with key thematic areas such as the overarching human trafficking situation in Trinidad and Tobago, victim needs and available services, including the gaps and shortcomings within the system, training requirements and data and research needs. The next chapter, Conclusions, provides a summative view of the findings. The final chapter, Recommendations illustrates the key areas of action that were identified by respondents to improve efforts towards comprehensively supporting victims of trafficking.

25. United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and The Protocols Thereto
26. Exploitation, in this instance, referred to “at the minimum, the exploitation or 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” (UNODC 2004:42).
27. United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and The Protocols Thereto

METHODOLOGY

2



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Overview

The Trafficking in Persons Act, 2011, in Trinidad and Tobago, provides a framework for agencies involved in assistance efforts to victims of human trafficking. There are, however, few empirical efforts geared towards understanding and assessing support systems for Victims of Trafficking (VoTs) in Trinidad and Tobago.

Given this context, a qualitative methodological approach was determined to be the most appropriate form of social inquiry, as this study seeks to explore assistance to VoTs, and in so doing create a foundation for other types of inquiry.

Additionally, this methodological approach was consistent with the objectives of the study, which sought to examine the needs of stakeholders who extend assistance to VoTs, as well as the needs of beneficiaries to facilitate better planning, programme design and service delivery to this vulnerable population.

Hence, it was anticipated that in-depth interviews would facilitate a true reflection of the situation, under review, based on the observations and experiences of stakeholders and VoTs.

2.2 Goals of fieldwork

The major goals of the fieldwork were to:

- f. Identify the current situation of trafficking in persons in Trinidad and Tobago,
- g. Indicate key systems and structures that support assistance efforts to VoTs,
- h. Examine the main strengths and gaps of existing assistance services to VoTs,
- i. Understand the needs of both the stakeholders who assist VoTs and the VoTs, and
- j. Propose recommendations for improving assistance efforts to VoTs.

2.3.1 Target Population

Key stakeholders and VoTs were the two populations of interest that were targeted for this study.

Accordingly, key stakeholders comprised senior level professionals from Government agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and international organizations, who work in the area of human trafficking or extend assistance to VoTs.

On the other hand, the VoTs were persons who had undergone significant counselling, and willingly consented to participate in the exercise.

2.3.2 Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling strategy was employed for this study. This approach is recognized for its logic and power to select “information-rich cases” for in-depth studies.²⁸

Moreover, knowledge and expertise were important criterion, which informed the selection of key stakeholders and determined their suitability for inclusion in the exercise.²⁹

In addition, other predetermined criterion included stakeholders’ experience, seniority, and level of involvement in human trafficking matters.

Efforts were also made to integrate a cross section of organizations with varied interests to foster a comprehensive understanding. Thus, a total of 30 key stakeholders were interviewed - 15 government agencies, 9 NGOs and 6 international/regional organizations were interviewed.

Conversely, the primary determinants for the selection of VoTs were confirmed VoT status, informed consent, and receipt of several counselling sessions, prior to the interview process. Accordingly, a total of 15 VoTs were interviewed.

Interestingly, all the VoTs interviewed were female.

28. (Patton 2002:230)
29. (Sarantakos 2005:164)

2.3.3
Data Collection

Data collection commenced on 14th February and concluded on 11th March, 2022. It involved the use of semi-structured interviews, with prompt questions. Given the varied nature of the two target populations, different instruments were created for each category.

Accordingly, the interview questions for key stakeholders explored:

- The situation of trafficking in persons, inclusive of legislative efforts, standard operating procedures, effectiveness of prevention measures, and current demographic trends of both the VoT and the traffickers
- Services available for VoTs and existing processes and systems integrated into service delivery
- Referral mechanisms

- Resource needs of key stakeholders
- Data and research captured by key stakeholder agencies and
- Collaboration and cooperation efforts.

Alternatively, the VoT instrument aimed to examine:

- Demographic background
- Socio-economic background
- Rights and welfare
- Needs; and
- Services.

Informed consent was also a prerequisite for the participation of both populations and the confidentiality of responses was emphasized to interviewees.

2.3.4
Data Analysis

Data generated from the fieldwork was transcribed and analyzed through content analysis. This involved systematic review and data coding³⁰ into patterns and themes, based on the frequency of appearance in the transcripts.

2.3.4.1
Validity and Reliability

Researchers engaged in periodic validity checks, where possible, to guard against interviewer bias.

Further to this, intercoder reliability checks were performed to test the appropriateness of the constructs applied to the text, as well as to increase confidence in the counts made when adding up the number of times a particular theme is mentioned.³¹

2.3.5
Strengths and Limitations

A notable strength of the qualitative methodological approach was that the use of semi-structured interview questions allowed researchers to probe responses and ascertain greater clarity.

Additionally, respondents were able to clearly articulate their views.

Moreover, virtual interviews³² significantly reduced coordination dynamics involved in face-to-face interviews.

Notwithstanding this, some respondents were apprehensive to provide sensitive information within the virtual setting.

Another limitation was the exclusion of the male VoT perspective, as only female VoTs were interviewed.

Furthermore, a major drawback of employing a qualitative approach is that relationships between variables and causation could not be established with empirical accuracy, as obtained in quantitative approaches.

30. Coding in this instance refers to the assignment of codes to a unit identified in the study. Codes can be numbers, words or symbols (Sarantakos 2005:13).

31. (Bernard and Ryan 2010)

32. There were 28 virtual interviews and two (2) face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders and all VoT interviews were virtual.

LITERATURE NATURE REVIEW REVIEW

3



3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Assistance and support efforts for victims of trafficking (VoTs) could assume various forms as it is largely shaped by their needs, the availability of services, and the wherewithal of service providers to respond to these needs.

3.1 Victim Needs

VoTs are reportedly subjected to extensive abuses during the different phases of their trafficking experience³³ and this could result in a myriad of severe, long-term consequences such as injuries, illnesses, and impairments.³⁴

The needs of victims also vary immensely based on their personal circumstances, such as:

- Age,
- Gender,
- Type/s of exploitation encountered,
- Country of origin,
- Types and degrees of violence suffered,

- Isolation endured from their family and culture,
- Knowledge of the local language, and
- Material and financial resources.³⁵

Further to this, their stage of recovery, reintegration, and empowerment also influence their needs.³⁶

Accordingly, research has shown that victims of labour trafficking are most in need of advocacy and medical services, as opposed to sex trafficking victims, whose major needs entail legal/ paralegal services, medical services, and information/referral services.

In addition, it was discovered that victims’ needs changed over time. More specifically, immediately following their rescue VoTs require assistance with emergency needs such as accommodation; food; clothing and personal necessities; mental and dental care; and safety from traffickers. Once these needs are fulfilled,

33. Some of these abuses include physical and sexual violence and abuse (Zimmerman et al. 2008), threats against themselves or their family, deception, denied movement, food or medical attention, forced alcohol and/or drug use, confiscated documents and situations of debt bondage (Stöckl et al. 2021).
34. (Lederer and Wetzel 2014)
35. (Clawson and Dutch 2008a); (GRETA 2018)
36. (Clawson et al. 2003)

however, they transition towards short- and long-term needs such as transitional/permanent housing; education; job training; work permits to facilitate legal employment; identification documentation; and family reunification.³⁷

This typification is illustrated in the figure below, where the needs of victims are aligned with their age groups and physical locations.

Figure 3 – Needs of Victims of Human Trafficking

	International		Domestic
	Adults	Minors	Minors
Emergency			
Safety	✓	✓	✓
Housing	✓	✓	✓
Food/clothing	✓	✓	✓
Translation	✓	✓	
Legal guardianship		✓	✓
Short-/Long-Term			
Transitional housing	✓		✓
Long-term housing	✓		✓
Permanent placement		✓	
Legal assistance	✓	✓	✓
Advocacy			
Translation	✓	✓	✓
Medical care	✓	✓	✓
Mental health/counseling	✓	✓	✓
Substance abuse treatment			✓
Transportation	✓		✓
Life skills	✓	✓	✓
Education	✓	✓	✓
Financial assistance/management	✓		✓
Job training/employment	✓	✓	✓
Childcare	✓	✓	✓
Reunification/repatriation	✓	✓	✓
*While substance abuse treatment may be a need for international victims it was only identified as a need for domestic minor victims			

37. (Aron et al. 2006); (Clawson and Dutch 2008a); (Davy 2015)

Source: Clawson and Dutch (2008a)

Thus, within the literature VoTs’ needs were classified into the following general sub-themes:

- 1. Safety and Protection
- 2. Physical Care
- 3. Health or Medical Care
- 4. Psychosocial Support
- 5. Legal Advice and Assistance and
- 6. Empowerment Services.

3.1.1
Safety and Protection

Safety needs are regarded as a first priority need for VoTs.³⁸ Secure and safe emergency accommodation is therefore critical to safeguarding victims and averting re-victimization.

Moreover, victims need to be protected from traffickers and others in the community who are sympathetic to traffickers,³⁹ as the capacity of the traffickers to retaliate against victims, who have managed to escape and/or have testified against them, is well documented.⁴⁰

38. (Clawson and Dutch 2008a)
39. (Aron et al. 2006)
40. (IOM 2007:3)
41. This includes longer-term nutrition needs such as balanced nutrition and an adequate diet (Lisemby 2016).

3.1.2
Physical Care

Physical care includes the provision of emergency and basic needs such as clothing, food,⁴¹ and shelter/housing.⁴²

Additionally, the housing needs of adult victims vary to those of child victims.

Some victims may also require childcare and transportation to treatment locations, and international VoTs may need translation services, which are essential for integration and effective communication of other needs.⁴³

3.1.3
Health or Medical Needs

Various forms of exploitation and abuse endured by VoTs during their trafficking increases their vulnerability to a plethora of health-related challenges.⁴⁴ Specifically, VoTs have reportedly presented with physical injuries; generally, to the head or face,

42. (Clawson and Dutch 2008a)
43. (Clawson and Dutch 2008a ; (Pascual-Leone et al. 2017)
44. (IOM 2007)

neurological problems; and poor dietary health.⁴⁵

Apart from this, research findings highlighted a high prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases and infections (STDs/STIs),⁴⁶ inclusive of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV),⁴⁷ amongst VoTs, and survivors have frequently reported instances of pregnancy, miscarriage, and abortion.⁴⁸

In addition, cases of victims with serious substance abuse issues were also discovered.⁴⁹

Accordingly, key medical/health needs of VoTs include:

- STI and STD testing/treatment, inclusive of HIV testing
- Tuberculosis screening
- Family planning, inclusive of condoms and emergency contraception
- Prenatal care
- Gynaecological care
- Sexual assault forensic examination
- Dental examination
- Initial medical evaluation

45. (Lederer and Wetzel 2014)
46. (Lederer and Wetzel 2014); (Oram et al. 2016)
47. (Silverman et al. 2007); (Gupta et al. 2009)
48. (Lederer and Wetzel 2014)
49. (Clawson and Dutch 2008a)
50. Aron et al. 2006); (Greenbaum and Albright 2018)

- General primary and preventative care (vaccination)
- Assessment and treatment of traumatic injuries
- Substance abuse assessment and
- Primary medical care for children of VoTs.⁵⁰

3.1.4
Psychosocial Support

Mental distress and psychological issues, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, low self-esteem, and feelings of shame or guilt have been detected amongst VoTs, primarily because of the trauma they have experienced.⁵¹

Furthermore, an association between longer time in trafficking and higher levels of depression and anxiety has been established.⁵²

Thus, many victims require trauma counselling, and some minor victims need anger management, conflict resolution, and family counseling.⁵³

51. (Clawson and Dutch 2008a); (Zimmerman et al. 2008); (Oram et al. 2012); (Lederer and Wetzel 2014); (Oram et al. 2016); (Powell et al. 2017)
52. (Hossain et al. 2010)
53. (Clawson and Dutch 2008a)

3.1.5
Legal Advice and Assistance

The legal needs of human trafficking victims are generally contingent on their individual circumstances and the trafficking situation they endured. Therefore, a range of legal support services, within the areas of civil and criminal law⁵⁴ may be required in categories such as family law, employment law, public benefits access, rights enforcement, and immigration or repatriation.⁵⁵

Moreover, some victims may need actual legal representation in court, legal counselling,⁵⁶ advocacy,⁵⁷ and victim–witness protection (i.e., protection or restraining orders).

Further to this, victims who are related to their traffickers, may require assistance with separation, divorce, child custody and support, guardianship, and adoption.⁵⁸

Additionally, international victims may have immigration-related matters linked to their undocumented status such as filing visa applications, immigration petitions, and fear of being deported, whilst others who prefer to return to their home countries, may have repatriation needs.⁵⁹

3.1.6
Empowerment Services

Economic empowerment is an important aspect of the recovery process for victims of human trafficking⁶⁰ and essential for the prevention of re-trafficking.⁶¹ More pointedly, victims require education, life skills, job training, access to employment opportunities, work permits, and financial management skills, such as banking and budgeting.⁶²

Additionally, some victims may have unique needs that must be addressed, such as adults and children with special needs.⁶³

54. (IOM 2007)
55. (US Department of Justice 2015)
56. i.e., understanding legal rights, keeping the trafficked person informed of the processes, procedures, potential consequences, the risks involved and the available assistance.
57. e.g., assistance retrieving identification documents, completing applications, attending appointments, and navigating the different U.S. systems, including criminal

justice, child welfare, immigration, human services, transportation, etc. (Clawson and Dutch 2008a)
58. (Clawson and Dutch 2008a); (US Department of Justice 2015)
59. (US Department of Justice 2015)
60. (Biegel 2022)
61. i.e., enrolment in school or technical training/certification.
62. (Aron et al. 2006); (Clawson and Dutch 2008a)
63. (Williamson et al. 2009)

3.2
Service Providers Needs and Challenges

The needs of VoTs are both voluminous and complex. Therefore, a diverse range of assistance responses is necessary.

Moreover, collaborative efforts allow highly specialized agencies, collectively, to support VoTs as no one agency could independently address all their concerns.⁶⁴

Accordingly, key service providers include:

- o Law enforcement agencies
- o Health care workers⁶⁵
- o Social service agencies
- o Legal professionals
- o Other Government agencies i.e., educators, employment counsellors
- o NGOs and
- o International organizations.⁶⁶

64. (Clawson et al. 2003)
65. Frontline health providers play an important role in the assistance of human trafficking victims because they are one of the few professionals likely to encounter a trafficking victim who is still in captivity (Crane and Moreno 2011).
66. (Clawson et al. 2003); (IOM 2019)

Existing literature, however, identified several encumbrances that service providers face.

More pointedly, Figure 4 presents an amalgam of research on the main barriers encountered by organizations that assist victims of human trafficking.

Figure 4 – Service Providers Needs and Challenges

Institutional			
Formal Rules & Regulations	Victims’ Legal Status	Cooperation & Communication	Knowledge of Victims’ Rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate or frustrating rules;• Need for legislative advocacy;• Inadequate victim assistance laws; and• Overly strict client eligibility requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immigration status impacts victim eligibility for social services funding;• Victim’s access to services impacted by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Pre-certification period issues, and◦ Prior criminal histories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for information sharing;• Poor collaboration and communication amongst key stakeholders; and• Lack of knowledge and understanding of available services and client eligibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insufficient public awareness on TiP; and• Victims unaware that they are victims of crime.⁶⁷

Service Delivery			
Unavailability of services	Inappropriateness of Services	Inaccessibility to Services	Length of Services
Particularly for domestic victims.	Need for culturally and gender appropriate services and approaches that are trauma-informed, victim-centered and rights- based, especially within psychological interventions.	Accessibility to services hampered by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language barriers and• No transportation options to services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Varied timelines to self-sufficiency, and• Delayed court cases.
Safety Concerns		Coordination	
For victims and staff from abusers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service delivery uncoordinated and disjointed; and• Referrals inconsistently followed up.	

67. This leads to unidentified and unserved victims (Clawson and Dutch 2008a).

Organizational		
Resources	Staff Training	In-house Procedures
<p>Need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding;• Additional staff;• Building space;• Appropriate, affordable housing/shelter;⁶⁸• Health care; and• Contacts in home countries.	<p>Need for training in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Victim rights;• Victim identification;• Responding to the needs of victims;• Dealing with medical/mental issues;• Building a trust relationship;• Cultural sensitivity;• Outreach methods;• Referral pathways;• Confidentiality issues; and• Networking and collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of effective protocols;• Confidentiality concerns; and• Absent or inadequate data management systems.

Sources: Clawson 2003; Clawson et al. 2008; Gabriele et al. 2014; Davy 2015; Ross et al. 2015; Pascual-Leone 2017 and Botha and Warria (2021).

68. Transitional and permanent housing and housing for male clients, children, and families were identified as particularly difficult to secure (Clawson and Dutch 2008a); (Davy 2015).

Apart from these issues, law enforcement agencies have encountered specific obstacles such as client distrust⁶⁹ and unwillingness to cooperate.⁷⁰

A study on health care workers also revealed that the delivery of integrated assistance was problematic⁷¹ and specialized medical treatment for VoTs, such as care for acute, long-term needs, involved long waiting lists and high costs, especially for mental health services and substance abuse treatment.⁷²

3.2.1
COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic ushered in monumental challenges for service providers and derailed VoT assistance efforts and advancements.

For instance, it was highlighted that frontline organizations had to confront the following difficulties:

- Funding challenges
 - Diversion of resources to address the pandemic.⁷³

- Reduced ability to perform normal activities
 - New Police tasks for the enforcement of lockdowns and social distancing affected their normal operational capacity.⁷⁴
- Increased demand for assistance
- Decreased access to victims
- Challenges for shelter
- Planning and coordination challenges and
- Hindered justice mechanisms.⁷⁵

3.3
The Trafficking in Persons Framework
within Trinidad and Tobago

The twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has a population of approximately 1.4 million⁷⁶ and it covers an area of 5,128 km².

Its maritime borders are shared with, Grenada, Barbados, Guyana, and Venezuela, (Bolivarian Republic of). The islands are situated 12 km (7

miles) northeast of the coast of Venezuela and there are also inlet islands located in the Gulf of Paria, which includes Chacachacare, Huevos, Monos, and Gaspar Grande.⁷⁷

Trinidad and Tobago first appeared in the United States (U.S.) Department of State’s Trafficking in Persons Report in 2009, with a ranking of Tier 2.⁷⁸ Since this time the country’s standing has fluctuated, however, in 2022 it was remained at a rank of Tier 2 Watchlist List for the second consecutive year. More pointedly, the Report identified the following key contributory factors to this ranking:

- Insufficient consideration of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity
- Weak victim identification and services
- Non-adoption of the National Action Plan for 2021-2023

- No trafficker convictions under the national anti-trafficking law and
- Significant concerns on corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes.⁷⁹

In addition, it recognized a need for “increased 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.”⁸⁰

The issue of trafficking in persons (TiP) has also been incorporated into a few local research efforts such as the:

- International Organization for Migration’s (IOM’s) 2013 Study which profiled trafficking in persons, within the context of irregular migration,
- The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) exercises,

of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or significantly increasing, 2) there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing effort to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons of the previous year and 3) the determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance is based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year. Tier 3 rank is given to countries that do not comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

79. (US Department of State 2022: 547)
80. (US Department of State 2022: 547)

69. (Clawson et al. 2006)
70. (Davy 2015)
71. (Caliber 2007)
72. (Clawson and Dutch 2008a)
73. (UNODC 2020b)
74. (UNODC 2020b)
75. (UNODC 2020b); (UNODC 2021b)
76. <https://cso.gov.tt/subjects/population-and-vital-statistics/population/>

77. (eTecK 2011)
78. The U.S. Department of State employs a tier system to rank countries based on their compliance with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). Tier 1 rank – countries that comply fully with the TVPA’s minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; Tier 2 rank – countries that do not comply fully with the TVPA’s minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but are making significant efforts to do so. Tier 2 Watch List (WL) rank – countries that do not comply fully with the TVPA’s minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but are making significant efforts to do so and: 1) the absolute number

- IOM Beneficiary Needs Assessments (BNA), and
- IOM’s Vocational Training Assessments (VTA).

The 2013 Study underscored the critical roles of non-governmental organizations, (NGOs) government agencies, and international organizations’ care and assistance efforts for victims, and it elucidated on accommodation challenges for VoTs.

Additionally, although the study recognized training and sensitization efforts, it also highlighted important TiP-related skills gaps primarily amongst public officials and individuals who interacted with migrants.⁸¹

On the other hand, unpublished BNA data indicated that almost three-quarters of the VoTs were unemployed, whilst the unpublished VTA findings revealed English language deficiencies amongst VoT respondents and noted their interest in acquiring training to improve their employment prospects.

Accordingly, for the period 2013 to 2020, data from the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) indicated 563 reported instances of TiP, of which 126 were confirmed cases. The statistics also pointed to an evident reduction in the number of investigations, over time, and only a few persons have been charged for human trafficking and related offences, as shown in figure 5.

Figure 5 –Trinidad and Tobago Trafficking in Persons Data

Activities	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
No. of reports received	20	35	120	89	72	70	78	79
No. of confirmed victims	13	5	10	13	14	21	41	9
No. of investigations initiated	20	35	53	46	38	39	23	9
No. of persons charged for HT and related offences	12	0	10	5	6	11	7	7

Source: Counter Trafficking Unit, 2022⁸²

81. (Waldropt-Bonair et. al 2013)
82. Cited in Trinidad and Tobago Newsday, Sunday 6th March 2022. Available from: <https://newsday.co.tt/2022/03/06/prostitution-to-forced-labour-what-human-trafficking-looks-like-in-trinidad-and-tobago/>

3.3.1
Trafficking in Persons Legislative Framework

The Trafficking in Persons Act, No. 14 of 2011, was assented to in June 2011 in Trinidad and Tobago and operationalized in January 2013. These activities were juxtaposed with the country’s categorization as a destination, transit, and source country, within the US Department of State Trafficking in Persons 2010 Report, as well as it’s relegation to a Tier 2WL (Watch List) ranking.

Specifically, the legislation:

- Establishes the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) and delineates its functions;
- Prohibits all forms of trafficking; and
- Provides for victim protection and assistance mechanisms.

Moreover, it assigns the Minister of Social Development and Family Services with the

responsibility to determine key assistance provisions such as housing, education, medical assistance, and counselling.

Additionally, the TiP Act institutes a National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NTFATIP), which consists of Ministers responsible for National Security, Education, Social Development, Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, Labour, as well as the Office of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs. It also includes the possibility to co-opt (a) the head of the Central Authority; (b) the Chairman of the Board of the Children’s Authority; (c) other appropriate public officers, with specified responsibilities;⁸³ and (d) representatives from NGOs.

The NTFATIP is primarily tasked with developing policies and a national anti-TiP plan of action for the:

- Identification of and assistance to victims of trafficking
- Prosecution of traffickers

83. Specific responsibilities refer to public officers responsible for law enforcement, intelligence, immigration, social development, health, education, gender affairs, finance, foreign affairs, labour and justice.

- Repatriation of victims and
- Partnership with non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and other State entities.

It is important to note that the TiP Act is supported by other legislation such as the:

- o Immigration Act Chapter 18:01
- o Sexual Offences Act, 1986
- o Summary Offences Act, 1921
- o Proceeds of Crime Act, 2000
- o Kidnapping Act, 2003
- o Forgery Act 1925
- o Children’s Act 46:01
- o Offences Against the Person Act (Chap. 11:08) and
- o Civil Asset Recovery and Unexplained Wealth 2019.

Notwithstanding this, some of the legislation, such as the Immigration Act, are inconsistent with the TiP Act, whilst others appear to be overlooked such as the Sexual Offences Act, 1986.⁸⁴

Interestingly, in 2020, the Office of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs prepared draft legislation to intensify the penalties for human trafficking and this included increased penalties for public officials complicit in trafficking crimes.⁸⁵

3.3.2
Policy Framework

Internationally, Trinidad and Tobago is guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), and it has signed, ratified, and acceded to a suite of international conventions/protocols related to human rights, the protection of vulnerable populations, and the fight against trafficking in persons, as outlined Appendix B.

However, the country has not yet signed on to the following international instruments related to human trafficking:

- The Slavery Convention (1926)
- UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949)

84. (Waldropt-Bonair et. al 2013)
85. (US Department of State 2021)

- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000) and
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Apart from this, at the local level, the National Development Strategy (2016 – 2030), more commonly known as Vision 2030, directs Trinidad and Tobago’s development agenda. This Strategy outlines the broad socio-economic development pathway and determines time-specific goals towards national prosperity, economic growth, sustainable development, and resilience. Although, this framework does not refer specifically to TiP-related matters, it encapsulates general parameters for strengthening social protection systems and building modern, efficient, and effective public institutions, inclusive of law enforcement systems and the administration of justice.

3.3.2.1
National Plan of Action

In accordance with the Trinidad and Tobago TiP Act, the first National Plan of Action for Trinidad and Tobago was developed, in 2016, for the period 2016-2020 to guide the work of the CTU and stakeholder agencies.

It comprised a comprehensive set of measures to address the four Ps of anti-human trafficking, i.e., Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership, and identified four strategic goals, which focused on:

1. Prevention – included areas such as public awareness, capacity building, and the legal and regulatory frameworks.
2. Identification of, Assistance to, and Protection of Victims of Trafficking - encompassed victim identification, social support, protection of victims, and witness reintegration.
3. Investigation and Prosecution of Traffickers - outlined law enforcement treatment and the victim-centred and human rights-based approaches.

4. Partnerships - examined cooperation and coordination, interoperability, and efficacy, as well as the involvement of NGOs.

Further to this, the NTFATIP drafted a National Plan of Action, in consultation with several stakeholders,⁸⁶ for the period 2021-2025.⁸⁷

3.3.2.2
Other National Policies

Apart from the National Plan of Action, there are other critical, complementary national policies such as the:

a. National Child Policy – details the objectives and strategies consistent with the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago’s (GoRTT’s) commitment to children’s rights and ensuring their best interest, as well as empowerment and positive development. The protection of children is a key policy outcome as it recognises that children must be “protected from harm, violence and exploitation and their legal rights are upheld”.⁸⁸

b. National Policy on Gender and Development – advances the Government’s commitments under Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This Policy also emphasises the elimination of gender discrimination in all its forms and responds to harmful gender disparities. Hence, key focal areas related to the anti-trafficking agenda include Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and human security, labour and employment, unwaged economic activities, and poverty alleviation; and

c. Labour Migration Policy - drafting commenced in 2019 but it is not yet finalized. It will focus directly on issues related to labour migration, such as employment of migrants, labour migration flows and occupational skills shortages, along with a comprehensive institutional framework to manage its governance.

86. Stakeholders included more than 100 NGOs, international organisations, foreign embassies, religious bodies, and a university.
87. (US Department of State 2021)
88. (US Department of State 2021)

3.3.3
Institutional Arrangements

Institutionally, several agencies support the goals and objectives of the NTFATIP, however, the CTU is charged with primary responsibilities.

3.3.3.1
Counter Trafficking Unit

The CTU is the lead government agency, under the Ministry of National Security, for human trafficking issues. It was established in 2013, and its core functions include:

- o Interviewing/screening individuals associated with trafficking
- o Investigating matters pertaining to trafficking
- o Operating a 24/7 hotline for the reporting of cases
- o Conducting research on human trafficking and
- o Liaising and coordinating with other agencies/NGOs to provide necessary

support to victims of trafficking (and the families).

Correspondingly, the Unit conducted a National Threat Assessment of Human Trafficking in 2016, with over 50 stakeholders , and the findings informed the 2016 National Plan of Action.

In addition, the Unit advanced Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with the following agencies for the specified purposes:

- o The Children’s Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT) – to enhance the identification of placement options for child trafficking victims; and
- o The Ministry of Labour (MOL) - to protect residents including migrants of Trinidad and Tobago, from human trafficking, child labour, and labour exploitation. This MoU solidified the collaboration between the Labour Inspectorate Unit (LIU) of the Ministry of Labour and the CTU in preventing and combating trafficking in persons including children and forced labour.

Furthermore, the CTU produced and disseminated a Pocket Guide for Frontline

Officers, which informed on victim identification techniques.

The Unit also provides TiP sensitization and training sessions to various stakeholders,⁸⁹ inclusive of sensitivity training to judges and magistrates, to avoid re-traumatization of trafficking victims.

Nonetheless, it is challenged by limited funding, staffing resources, and expertise.

Additionally, it was reported that NGOs have desisted from making referrals to the CTU, due to inaction on information received.⁹⁰

3.3.3.2
Child Protection Unit

The Child Protection Unit (CPU) of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) was established to protect the rights of children under the law. The CPU investigates matters of sexual offences/abuse, physical abuse, abandonment/neglect, and ill-treatment of children, and engages with stakeholders.

It also developed draft referral and management procedures for cases received from the CTU and the Immigration Division.⁹¹

89. Stakeholders included: government agencies, law enforcement, international agencies, NGOs and the media.
90. (US Department of State 2021)
91. (US Department of State 2021)

3.3.3.3
Children’s Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

The CATT is responsible for:

- o Promoting the welfare, care, and protection of all children;
- o Supporting children in need of care and protection;
- o Licencing and monitoring community residences and nurseries;
- o Managing the foster care system and adoption process;
- o Providing support for children in conflict with the law; and
- o Promoting child rights.

Furthermore, this agency is in the process of finalizing a draft manual for victim care.

3.3.3.4
Victim Services

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) provides funding to several NGOs offering varied services. Specifically, within the 2022 reporting period, the US Department of State’s TiP Report highlighted that NGOs and three statutory boards received funding from MSDFS for victims of trafficking and other crimes.⁹²

Further to this, an agreement between the Ministry of National Security (MNS) and an international organization facilitated the provision of food, shelter and psychosocial services to adult victims and the Ministry of Health (MoH) assisted foreign trafficking victims.⁹³

The lack of implementation of a formalized protocol and a functioning, and active coordinating committee, however, continue to challenge victim care. Hence, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GoRTT) acknowledges the need for strengthened quality of victim care, inclusive of specialised placement facilities for children, equipped with adequate personnel and services, and placement facilities for children transitioning out of the care system.⁹⁴

92. (US Department of State 2022)
93. (US Department of State 2022)

It was further noted that “working-level staff at NGOs and shelters required more training on trafficking indicators to better identify potential trafficking victims.”⁹⁵

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic stretched the capacity of authorities and NGOs to provide essential services⁹⁶.

3.3.3.5
Judicial System

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and the Judiciary have responsibility for prosecuting and hearing all cases, respectively, related to human trafficking.

It was emphasized though that five (5) new courts and specialized divisions, with 100 new courtrooms for cases including human trafficking, were established to reduce court delays and backlogs, streamline processes, and enable a more victim-centered approach, especially for cases involving children.

There are, however, no courts dedicated solely to trafficking cases. Moreover, the pandemic produced significant delays for judicial proceedings and TiP investigations.⁹⁷

94. (US Department of State 2022)
95. (US Department of State 2022:548)
96. (US Department of State 2022)
97. (US Department of State 2022)

KEY FINDINGS

4. KEY FINDINGS

Stakeholder interviews provided insightful data on the various dimensions of trafficking in persons in Trinidad and Tobago and presented the perspective of service providers, as it related to assistance efforts.

Contrastingly, interviews with victims of human trafficking informed of the demographic trends, challenges, and needs of this population.

4.1 Trafficking Situation

All stakeholders regarded human trafficking as a formidable matter for Trinidad and Tobago. One stakeholder also noted that, “in the last say 10 years it has become a major issue whereas prior to that ... the incidents of that were very small and sort of isolated.”⁹⁸

Another stakeholder emphasized that the importance of trafficking in persons (TiP) should not be premised entirely on prevalence as “one person trafficked is too much.”⁹⁹

Moreover, increased cases of human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago were attributed to the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela¹⁰⁰, and it was acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic reportedly heightened the vulnerability of Venezuelan migrants to TiP.¹⁰¹

Apart from this, several stakeholders classified the island as a destination country for human trafficking, which was consistent with the findings of the 2022 TiP Report, as well as a transit country. Stakeholders also stated that Trinidad and Tobago’s close proximity to Latin America and Venezuela,¹⁰² its porous borders¹⁰³ and vulnerable, unofficial entry points¹⁰⁴ predisposed it to these classifications.

96. (US Department of State 2022)
97. (US Department of State 2022)
98. STI_Ref. 13:3
99. STI_Ref. 15:3
100. STI_Ref. 7:2

101. STI_Ref. 7:2
102. STI_Ref. 2:3; STI_Ref. 5:4; STI_Ref. 16:3; STI_Ref. 30:3
103. STI_Ref. 27:3
104. STI_Ref. 21:3; STI_Ref. 27:3

On the other hand, a smaller number of interviewees identified the island as a source country for TiP, and referred to cases of missing persons, particularly young, local girls, as possible instances of internal trafficking.¹⁰⁵

In addition, a few stakeholders highlighted that it was especially difficult to determine whether victims of trafficking (VoTs) are sourced internally¹⁰⁶ as missing persons may be considered deceased by the authorities¹⁰⁷ and confirmed evidence of VoTs transiting Trinidad and Tobago is unavailable.¹⁰⁸

4.1.1 Level of Organization

Regarding the scale of organization, most stakeholders informed that human trafficking schemes are intricately organized, networked¹⁰⁹ ‘criminal enterprises’¹¹⁰, with experienced operatives in both Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago. More pointedly, one interviewee stated:

104. STI_Ref. 21:3; STI_Ref. 27:3
105. STI_Ref. 1:4; STI_Ref. 8:5; STI_Ref. 22:4; STI_Ref. 25:3-4
106. STI_Ref. 13:4
107. STI_Ref. 13:4
108. STI_Ref. 6:5; STI_Ref. 12:4; STI_Ref. 22:4

It probably started off small scale, but now it’s very large ... so for example they would have the person recruiting them..., most likely they are Venezuelans and then we would have both Venezuelans and Trinidadians to bring them here and then we have a next set of persons to transport them from the beaches to homes, then there are people who provide homes and then persons who provide transport to clients, so it’s a big industry right now.¹¹¹

Interestingly, a stakeholder expressed that these assertions are well known in the communities and by law enforcement agencies, but there seemed to be a “fear on the part of the authorities to really, you know, get in there and you know, do what needs to be done in order to bring down some of these syndicates.”¹¹²

Conversely, some stakeholders acknowledged the existence of local opportunists engaged in human trafficking, who seek to “cash in on the lucrative trade”¹¹³ given their access to resources, such as boats or inland

109. STI_Ref. 4:3; STI_Ref. 22:4; STI_Ref. 23:4; STI_Ref. 30:4
110. STI_Ref. 6:5
111. STI_Ref. 12:5
112. STI_Ref. 8:4
113. STI_Ref. 7:3

transportation, whilst other interviewees recognized a combination of both systems.¹¹⁴

Further to this, some stakeholders indicated that human trafficking is a profitable¹¹⁵ business¹¹⁶ within which some law enforcement¹¹⁷, local authorities,¹¹⁸ wealthy businessmen,¹¹⁹ and well-known companies¹²⁰ are allegedly implicated, to varying degrees, with different facilitating roles and functions.

It was stressed, “it’s so big ...you’re talking about black Prados coming up¹²¹,” and reference was made to apartment rentals in West Trinidad to house little girls.¹²²

One stakeholder also purported that some law enforcement agents perform nefarious roles such as avoidance of areas with illegal activities; the provision of security for exploitative activities; tip offs on establishment raids; and the provision of fraudulent documents.¹²³

114. STI_Ref. 3:4; STI_Ref. 25:5; STI_Ref. 29:3; STI_Ref. 30:4;
115. STI_Ref. 17:3
116. STI_Ref. 2:4; STI_Ref. 10:3; STI_Ref. 21:3
117. STI_Ref. 4:5; STI_Ref. 6:5; STI_Ref. 8:6; STI_Ref. 12:5;
STI_Ref. 26:4; STI_Ref. 29:3;
118. STI_Ref. 8:6; STI_Ref. 12:5; STI_Ref. 26:4
119. STI_Ref. 1:4; STI_Ref. 8:6
120. STI_Ref. 8:6
121. STI_Ref. 8:6
122. STI_Ref. 26:4
123. STI_Ref. 12:5
124. STI_Ref. 1:4; STI_Ref. 11:3; STI_Ref. 17:4; STI_Ref. 23:4;
STI_Ref. 21:3
125. STI_Ref. 3:4; STI_Ref. 6:6; STI_Ref. 7:3; STI_Ref. 8:6;

These findings concurred with the 2022 TiP Report, which referred to the involvement of law enforcement and security officials in trafficking.

In addition, interviewees underscored the connection between human trafficking and other illicit activities, primarily, prostitution¹²⁴ and the smuggling of arms and ammunition¹²⁵, drugs¹²⁶, animals¹²⁷, and people.¹²⁸

4.1.2
Demographics

4.1.2.1
Victim of Trafficking

Most of the stakeholder respondents revealed that VoTs in Trinidad and Tobago were predominantly female,Venezuelan nationals¹²⁹ between the ages of 14 to 25 years old.A few interviewees also indicated that there were instances of local VoTs, but on a much smaller

STI_Ref. 12:5; STI_Ref. 13:5; STI_Ref. 15:4; STI_Ref. 17:4;
STI_Ref. 22:5; STI_Ref. 24:5; STI_Ref. 25:5; STI_Ref. 26:4;
STI_Ref. 27:3; STI_Ref. 28:4; STI_Ref. 29:3
126. STI_Ref. 2:4; STI_Ref. 5:5; STI_Ref. 6:6; STI_Ref. 7:3;
STI_Ref. 8:6; STI_Ref. 12:5; STI_Ref. 13:5; STI_Ref. 15:4;
STI_Ref. 17:4; STI_Ref. 22:5; STI_Ref. 23:3-4; STI_Ref.
24:5; STI_Ref. 26:4; STI_Ref. 27:3; STI_Ref. 28:4; STI_Ref.
29:3; STI_Ref. 30:4
127. STI_Ref. 3:4; STI_Ref. 6:6; STI_Ref. 7:3; STI_Ref. 13:5;
STI_Ref. 25:5; STI_Ref. 28:4; STI_Ref. 12:5
128. STI_Ref. 6:6; STI_Ref. 15:4; STI_Ref. 30:4
129. One stakeholder highlighted cases of VoTs who were
indigenous Venezuelan, STI_Ref. 28:4

scale,¹³⁰ as well as VoTs from Indi¹³¹ a , Colombia¹³², the Dominican Republic¹³³, Bolivia¹³⁴ , Guyana¹³⁵ and the African continent¹³⁶.

Apart from this, stakeholders referred to situations of minors who were VoTs¹³⁷ and, to a lesser extent, noted the existence of male VoTs, some of whom were Indian nationals¹³⁸.

Interestingly, some respondents stated that they encountered VoTs who were unaware of their trafficked situation¹³⁹, possibly because of unfamiliarity with their rights and existing laws¹⁴⁰.

Incidentally, interviews with VoTs informed that the majority were single, female Venezuelans who were generally in the 20-29 age group and had either started or completed secondary school. It was also noted that most of the respondents had children and, other dependents, and some of them encountered

130. One stakeholder highlighted cases of VoTs who were
indigenous Venezuelan, STI_Ref. 28:4
131. STI_Ref. 6:4; STI_Ref. 7:3
132. STI_Ref. 15:3; STI_Ref. 26:3
133. STI_Ref. 15:3; STI_Ref. 26:3
134. STI_Ref. 6:4
135. STI_Ref. 12:4; STI_Ref. 15:3
136. STI_Ref. 6:4

difficulties accessing education for their children¹⁴¹.

Furthermore, several of them were currently unemployed for various reasons such as no access to a work permit, childcare responsibilities, pregnancy, and health reasons.

Correspondingly, the findings of both target groups were consistent with the International Organization for Migration’s (IOM’s) data, which determined similar demographic trends.

4.1.2.2
Traffickers

Regarding the traffickers, stakeholders informed that they tend to be males from both Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela,¹⁴² as well as a smaller number of Venezuelan females¹⁴³, roughly between the ages of 27-60 years.¹⁴⁴

One stakeholder further elaborated on the

137. STI_Ref. 1:3; STI_Ref. 8:5
138. STI_Ref. 12:4
139. STI_Ref. 1:3; STI_Ref. 5:4; STI_Ref. 22:3
140. STI_Ref. 3-4
141. VM_Ref. 3:6; VM_Ref. 15:3
142. STI_Ref. 12:5; STI_Ref. 13:4; STI_Ref. 30:5
143. STI_Ref. 2:4; STI_Ref. 12:5
144. STI_Ref. 12:6; STI_Ref. 13:6; STI_Ref. 17:4

gender roles of the traffickers and recognized that, “the men are the drivers of it and the muscle...the woman would have a more of a passive role in luring the women into those situations ... because the most people coming from Venezuela”.¹⁴⁵

4.1.3
Methods of Recruitment

Stakeholders identified social media, inclusive of WhatsApp and Facebook, as a main form of recruitment for VoTs discovered within Trinidad and Tobago¹⁴⁶. It was also noted that newspaper advertisements were employed, but to a lesser degree¹⁴⁷. Additionally, some scenarios preyed on the victims’ financial vulnerability and were grounded in deception¹⁴⁸ and extravagant offers¹⁴⁹. In other instances, victims were encouraged by family members or friends¹⁵⁰ and there was mention of young girls being groomed¹⁵¹.

Young girls were also reportedly being recruited from various areas in Venezuela such

as Tucupita, La Barra, Guiria, Valencia, and La Guaida¹⁵².

4.1.4
Routes and Entry Points

Several stakeholders observed an expansion in irregular entry points, via sea, beyond the traditional southern and southwestern peninsular options; and they noted that any unmanned area along the island’s coastline could be used.¹⁵³ More specifically, interviewees indicated that trafficked persons originated from Tucupita¹⁵⁴ and La Barra¹⁵⁵ and could be ‘dropped off’ at the following locations:

- o Cedros¹⁵⁶
- o Chaguaramas¹⁵⁷
- o Mayaro¹⁵⁸
- o Icacos¹⁵⁹
- o Toco¹⁶⁰
- o Carenage¹⁶¹
- o Moruga¹⁶² and
- o Palo Seco¹⁶³

145. STI_Ref.13:4
146. STI_Ref.7:3; STI_Ref.12:5; STI_Ref.13:4; STI_Ref.14:2
147. STI_Ref.14:2
148. STI_Ref.1:4-5; STI_Ref.6:6; STI_Ref.15:4; STI_Ref.24:4
149. STI_Ref.1:4-5
150. STI_Ref.6:6; STI_Ref.12:5
151. STI_Ref.1:5; STI_Ref.7:3
152. STI_Ref.12:5; STI_Ref.23:5; STI_Ref.26:4; STI_Ref.30:5
153. STI_Ref.3:4-5; STI_Ref.13:6; STI_Ref.14:3-4; STI_Ref.23:5; STI_Ref.24:5
154. STI_Ref.6:6; STI_Ref.12:5; STI_Ref.13:6; STI_Ref.14:3

155. STI_Ref.12:5
156. STI_Ref.3:4-5; STI_Ref.11:2; STI_Ref.14:3; STI_Ref.15:4; STI_Ref.23:5;
157. STI_Ref.12:5; STI_Ref.13:6; STI_Ref.14:3; STI_Ref.23:5
158. STI_Ref.14:3; STI_Ref.23:5
159. STI_Ref.11:2; STI_Ref.14:3; STI_Ref.23:5
160. STI_Ref.14:3;
161. STI_Ref.13:6
162. STI_Ref.12:5;
163. STI_Ref.14:3-4

Apart from this, one stakeholder referred to an island, between Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago, with indigenous people who intermittently provide shelter and food for victims for one to two weeks during their transit.¹⁶⁴

4.1.5
Types of Exploitation

Sexual exploitation emerged as the most prevalent form of exploitation to which victims are subjected in Trinidad and Tobago,¹⁶⁵ and one stakeholder opined that the demand for these engagements fuels its perpetuation.¹⁶⁶

Furthermore, labour exploitation was identified as less common, but evident¹⁶⁷ in the following sectors/areas:

- o Agriculture;¹⁶⁸
- o Private homes;¹⁶⁹
- o Construction;¹⁷⁰

164. STI_Ref.12:5
165. STI_Ref.6:3; STI_Ref.7:3; STI_Ref.8:5; STI_Ref.12:4; STI_Ref.13:3; STI_Ref.15:3; STI_Ref.24:3; STI_Ref.25:3; STI_Ref.26:3; STI_Ref.30:3
166. STI_Ref.15:3
167. STI_Ref.6:5; STI_Ref.7:3; STI_Ref.8:5; STI_Ref.12:4; STI_Ref.24:4; STI_Ref.26:3
168. STI_Ref.6:5; STI_Ref.24:4; STI_Ref.26:3
169. STI_Ref.6:5; STI_Ref.12:4
170. STI_Ref.6:5; STI_Ref.24:4
171. STI_Ref.24:4

- o Quarrying;¹⁷¹
- o Hardware establishments;¹⁷²
- o Restaurants and bars;¹⁷³
- o Supermarkets;¹⁷⁴ and
- o Spas.¹⁷⁵

Some stakeholders also highlighted cases of domestic servitude,¹⁷⁶ which involved Indian and Guyanese nationals.¹⁷⁷

Added to this, there was a view that labour exploitation incidents are more likely to ‘fly under the radar’.¹⁷⁸

4.2
Legislation

Most of the stakeholders had some level of familiarity with the local TiP Act¹⁷⁹ and some of them were explicitly guided by the tenets of the Act in their organizational operations.¹⁸⁰

Interestingly, there was a general sense that Act

172. STI_Ref.12:4
173. STI_Ref.6:4; STI_Ref.7:3
174. STI_Ref.24:4
175. STI_Ref.7:3
176. STI_Ref.12:4; STI_Ref.13:3; STI_Ref.26:3
177. STI_Ref.12:4
178. STI_Ref.6:3
179. STI_Ref.1:7; STI_Ref.6:11; STI_Ref.15:6; STI_Ref.19:2; STI_Ref.24:7; STI_Ref.28:5
180. STI_Ref.1:7; STI_Ref.6:11; STI_Ref.7:5; STI_Ref.12:7; STI_Ref.13:8; STI_Ref.19:3; STI_Ref.24:7; 5

is ‘good¹⁸¹’, however, its effectiveness hinged upon proper execution and enforcement.¹⁸² The literature reflected this finding.¹⁸³ Consequently, one stakeholder identified non-adherence to the Act as a ‘major gap’ to successful victim impacts.¹⁸⁴ More specifically, it was emphasized that:

- The Task Force has not been functional;¹⁸⁵
- The assumption of core roles, by key agencies, as stipulated by the Act, was stalled;¹⁸⁶
- There is insufficient engagement by senior level persons with requisite decision-making power¹⁸⁷; and
- There is limited impact evaluation of the Act¹⁸⁸.

Moreover, a need for the review and updating of local legislation to ensure that new realities

are adequately addressed, was articulated.¹⁸⁹ Correspondingly, one stakeholder informed of current amendment efforts to the TiP Act geared towards:

- o Inclusion of new definitions
- o Increased detention timeframe to 48 hours
- o Introduction of new offences, inclusive of ‘tipping off’ and the creation of false documents in response to complicit authorities and
- o Introduction of hybrid trials at both the Magistrate’s Court and the High Court to expedite the process.¹⁹⁰

Nonetheless, since the passage of the Act, there were no reported convictions.¹⁹¹ One possible explanation, proffered by a stakeholder, was insufficient victim support mechanisms, such as access to jobs and childcare options,

which impeded victim cooperation in trials, and often resulted in victims getting lost in the system or absconding.¹⁹²

Additionally, there was a view that although investigations increased during the 2017-2019 period, the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁹³ had adversely affected both investigations and prosecutions. This reflected the literature findings.¹⁹⁴

4.3
Institutional and Policy Frameworks

Stakeholder interviews explored key elements of the TiP institutional and policy frameworks. Accordingly, it was discovered that some areas required enhancement to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

Specifically, it was emphasized that Trinidad and Tobago does not have migration,¹⁹⁵ anti-smuggling, or labour migration policies.¹⁹⁶

Apart from this, one stakeholder described TiP investigations as unstructured, ad hoc, and slow¹⁹⁷ whilst another stated “we have a number of cold cases” that involve missing, young women.¹⁹⁸

Furthermore, there was an apparent lack of evidence to successfully prosecute perpetrators.¹⁹⁹

There was also a view that certain establishments operate with impunity as they are ‘still up and running²⁰⁰’ although potential VoTs have been detected at their businesses and there are minors within these spaces.²⁰¹

On the other hand, it was highlighted that there were no clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the treatment of VoTs and consequently, agencies tend to be ‘scrambling’ to respond upon the detection of a VoT.²⁰²

181. STI_Ref.6:9; STI_Ref.15:6; STI_Ref.24:7; STI_Ref.28:5
182. STI_Ref. 6:11-12; STI_Ref.24:7; STI_Ref.28:5
183. (Waldropt-Bonair et al. 2013:60)
184. STI_Ref. 6:11-12;
185. STI_Ref. 6:9;
186. STI_Ref. 6:9;

187. STI_Ref. 6:11;
188. STI_Ref. 6:12;
189. STI_Ref.7:5; STI_Ref.13:8;
190. STI_Ref.12:7
191. STI_Ref.6:7; STI_Ref.12:3; STI_Ref.15:5

192. STI_Ref.12:7
193. STI_Ref.4:4
194. (UNODC 2020b); (UNODC 2021b)
195. STI_Ref.1:3
196. STI_Ref.6:4
197. STI_Ref.8:4

198. STI_Ref.22:4
199. STI_Ref.8:5
200. STI_Ref.23:7
201. STI_Ref.26:3
202. STI_Ref.14:2

4.3.1
Prevention Efforts

In the area of TiP prevention, most stakeholders acknowledged the inadequacy of existing prevention methods.²⁰³

Additionally, it was asserted that more could be done to curb the demand for sex²⁰⁴ and forced labour.²⁰⁵

Moreover, prevention efforts, in the form of ‘person to person engagements’, were reportedly derailed by the COVID 19 pandemic.²⁰⁶

4.3.2
Cooperation and Collaboration

In the areas of cooperation and collaboration, the majority stakeholders were aware of national mechanisms to promote these activities among counter-TiP stakeholders.

Therefore, stakeholders identified the National Task Force, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on victim care, and the Counter-Trafficking Unit (CTU) and referred to the Response for Venezuela (R4V) Platform, as well as discussions with the IOM, United Nations (UN) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Additionally, a few organizations indicated that they collaborate²⁰⁷ with governmental agencies, and regional and international organizations such as IOM, UN, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Interpol, CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM Impacs), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Latin America Network on Migration on counter-trafficking in persons matters. More pointedly, these initiatives involved referrals, training, and technical assistance, sexual and reproductive

health services, as well as victim assistance and support.²⁰⁸

Nonetheless, a significant number of stakeholders were evidently unaware of the more targeted systems such as the National Plan of Action²⁰⁹ and those who were aware of the Plan expressed uncertainty regarding its status.²¹⁰

4.4
Needs

The literature espoused that victims have specific and sometimes unique needs. The needs of VoTs were informed by accounts of victims, as well as the stakeholders who extend various types of services to VoTs, and it coincided with the prevailing research.²¹¹ Specifically, the main needs included shelter,²¹² food,²¹³ and clothing,²¹⁴ as well as those detailed below:

- o Medical/health;²¹⁵
- o Psychological support;²¹⁶
- o Education and Training;²¹⁷
- o Legal Assistance;²¹⁸
- o Protection/Safety;²¹⁹
- o Employment;²²⁰
- o Translation;²²¹
- o Information;²²²
- o Return Home;²²³
- o Integration;²²⁴
- o Freedom;²²⁵ and
- o Documentation.²²⁶

Furthermore, the urgent need for shelter was reiterated. Stakeholders also recognized the unavailability of accommodation for both adults and children who are victims²²⁷ and highlighted these challenges as an underserved need²²⁸ that creates an overreliance on the IOM.

203. STI_Ref.1:6; STI_Ref.6:7; STI_Ref.7:4; STI_Ref.13:7; STI_Ref.14:4; STI_Ref.15:5; STI_Ref.23:3; STI_Ref.24:3; STI_Ref.28:5

204. STI_Ref.13:7; STI_Ref.15:5

205. STI_Ref.13:7

206. STI_Ref.12:3

207. STI_Ref.1:20; STI_Ref.5:22; STI_Ref.7:14; STI_Ref.12:22; STI_Ref.15:16; STI_Ref.17:14; STI_Ref.28:15; STI_Ref.29:14; STI_Ref.30:15

208. STI_Ref.1:20; STI_Ref.5:22

209. STI_Ref.1:20; STI_Ref.2:18; STI_Ref.8:22; STI_Ref.9:17; STI_Ref.11:11; STI_Ref.16:15; STI_Ref.18:20; STI_Ref.21:14; STI_Ref.22:15; STI_Ref.28:15; STI_Ref.29:14

210. STI_Ref.6:38; STI_Ref.7:13

211. (Clawson and Dutch 2008a)

212. STI_Ref.1:8; STI_Ref.3:6; STI_Ref.4:6; STI_Ref.7:6; STI_Ref.9:7; STI_Ref.10:5; STI_Ref.12:2; STI_Ref.13:9; STI_Ref.14:6; STI_Ref.15:6-7; STI_Ref.16:6; STI_Ref.17:6; STI_Ref.23:7; STI_Ref.25:8; STI_Ref.26:3; STI_Ref.27:5; STI_Ref.28:6; VM_Ref.3:9; VM_Ref.5:8; VM_Ref.10:5; VM_Ref.12:6; VM_Ref.14:8; VM_Ref.15:6; VM_Ref.17:8-9; VM_Ref.18:5; VM_Ref.19:6;

213. STI_Ref.3:6; STI_Ref.7:6; STI_Ref.12:2; STI_Ref.13:9; STI_Ref.14:6; STI_Ref.15:6-7; STI_Ref.18:7; STI_Ref.20:7; STI_Ref.30:7; VM_Ref.3:6; VM_Ref.4:8; VM_Ref.5:8; VM_Ref.6:9; VM_Ref.7:8-9; VM_Ref.8:5; VM_Ref.10:5; VM_Ref.12:6; VM_Ref.13:9; VM_Ref.14:8-9; VM_Ref.15:9; VM_Ref.17:10; VM_Ref.18:6; VM_Ref.19:6; VM_Ref.20:9

214. STI_Ref.3:6; STI_Ref.4:6; STI_Ref.7:6; STI_Ref.9:7; STI_Ref.12:8; STI_Ref.14:6; STI_Ref.15:6-7; STI_Ref.18:7; STI_Ref.20:7; STI_Ref.30:7; VM_Ref.3:9-10; VM_Ref.4:8; VM_Ref.5:8; VM_Ref.6:8-9; VM_Ref.7:8-9; VM_Ref.8:9; VM_Ref.10:9-10; VM_Ref.12:10; VM_Ref.13:9; VM_Ref.14:8-9; VM_Ref.15:9; VM_Ref.17:10; VM_Ref.18:10; VM_Ref.19:10; VM_Ref.20:9

215. STI_Ref.1:8; STI_Ref.4:6; STI_Ref.6:12; STI_Ref.7:6; STI_Ref.12:8; STI_Ref.17:16; STI_Ref.20:7; STI_Ref.25:8; VM_Ref.3:6; VM_Ref.4:6; VM_Ref.6:7; VM_Ref.7:5; VM_Ref.8:6-7; VM_Ref.10:6-7; VM_Ref.12:6; VM_Ref.13:5; VM_Ref.14:7; VM_Ref.18:7-8

216. STI_Ref.1:8; STI_Ref.4:6; STI_Ref.7:6; STI_Ref.8:10; STI_Ref.10:5; STI_Ref.12:7; STI_Ref.15:6-7; STI_Ref.18:7; STI_Ref.20:7; STI_Ref.23:7; STI_Ref.25:8; STI_Ref.27:5; VM_Ref.10:7-8; VM_Ref.12:8; VM_Ref.15:7-8; VM_Ref.18:8-9; VM_Ref.19:8-9

217. STI_Ref.6:8; STI_Ref.12:4; VM_Ref.3:6; VM_Ref.5:9; VM_Ref.6:9; VM_Ref.8:9-10; VM_Ref.10:10; VM_Ref.14:9; VM_Ref.15:10; VM_Ref.17:10-11; VM_Ref.18:11; VM_Ref.19:11-12; VM_Ref.20:10

218. STI_Ref.4:6; STI_Ref.7:6; STI_Ref.17:6; STI_Ref.18:7;

STI_Ref.23:7; STI_Ref.25:8; STI_Ref.26:7; STI_Ref.27:5; VM_Ref.3:7; VM_Ref.6:6; VM_Ref.8:5; VM_Ref.12:6; VM_Ref.14:5; VM_Ref.18:5

219. STI_Ref.1:8; STI_Ref.2:7; STI_Ref.4:6; STI_Ref.5:8; STI_Ref.9:7; STI_Ref.11:4; STI_Ref.17:6; STI_Ref.21:5; STI_Ref.22:8; STI_Ref.27:5; STI_Ref.30:7; VM_Ref.18:5

220. VM_Ref.6:8; STI_Ref.12:4; VM_Ref.5:5; VM_Ref.8:5; VM_Ref.14:5; VM_Ref.20:5

221. STI_Ref.20:7; STI_Ref.25:8; STI_Ref.26:7

222. STI_Ref.26:3

223. VM_Ref.4:5

224. STI_Ref.27:5;

225. VM_Ref.17:5

226. STI_Ref.6:12

227. STI_Ref.12:4; STI_Ref.14:6; STI_Ref.15:6-7

228. STI_Ref.18:8; STI_Ref.30:8

Other underserved needs included:

- Access to education for children;²²⁹
- Legal employment;²³⁰
- Family/care-based care systems;²³¹ for minors; and
- Consistent counselling.²³²

In addition, it was noted that some employers do not recognize the victims’ Minister’s permit as a valid document for work and therefore greater sensitization is needed in this area to support work opportunities for VoTs²³³.

4.4.1
COVID 19

In the wake of the COVID 19 pandemic, both

the stakeholders and the literature informed of the pressing issues encountered by migrants and refugees such as:

- o Declined income and loss of livelihood;²³⁴
- o Increased vulnerability to TiP;²³⁵
- o Decreased access to shelters;²³⁶
- o Heightened health issues and/or reduced health care options;²³⁷ and
- o Reduced assistance options, inclusive of mental health services.²³⁸

4.5
Services

Stakeholder feedback informed that VoTs in Trinidad and Tobago have access the services outlined in figure 6.

Figure 6 – Services Accessible to VOTs in Trinidad and Tobago

Counselling ²³⁹	Legal Services ²⁴⁰	Legal Services Life skill development (courses) ²⁴¹
Housing ²⁴²	Clothing ²⁴³	Referrals ²⁴⁴
Health care ²⁴⁵	Witness Protection ²⁴⁶	Repatriation services ²⁴⁷
Food ²⁴⁸	English as a second language (classes) ²⁴⁹	

229. STI_Ref.2:7; STI_Ref.9:7; STI_Ref.18:8; STI_Ref.22:8; STI_Ref.29:6
230. STI_Ref.4:7; STI_Ref.22:9
231. STI_Ref.29:6
232. STI_Ref.20:8
233. STI_Ref.12:4
234. STI_Ref.2:7; STI_Ref.4:6-7; STI_Ref.27:5; (UNODC 2021b)

235. STI_Ref.17:7; STI_Ref.27:5; (UNODC 2021b)
236. STI_Ref.2:7; STI_Ref.17:7; STI_Ref.20:8; (UNODC 2021b)
237. STI_Ref.1:8; STI_Ref.4:6-7; STI_Ref.16:6; STI_Ref.18:8; STI_Ref.30:7; (UNODC 2021b)
238. STI_Ref.4:6-7; STI_Ref.30:7; (UNODC 2021b)
239. STI_Ref.2:8; STI_Ref.4:8; STI_Ref.8:12; STI_Ref.20:10; STI_Ref.26:10; STI_Ref.29:8

Moreover, it was revealed that a number of agencies have been actively involved in the provision of services to VoTs, in Trinidad and

Tobago, in both official and unofficial capacities. Figure 7 details the agencies and types of services extended.

Key Service Area	Agencies/Organizations
TiP Investigations	CTU
	MOL ²⁵⁰
Prosecution of TiP	MAGLA ²⁵¹
Shelter	St. Dominic's Children's Home (Government)
	St. Jude's Home for Girls (Government)
	Sophia House (Government)
	Mary Care (Non-Government)
Rental Support	IOM
Food	St. Dominic's Children's Home
	St. Jude's Home for Girls
	Sophia House
	Mary Care
	IOM
	Archdiocesan Ministry of Migrants and Refugees (AMMR)
Education	St. Dominic's Children's Home
Clothing Families in Action	Mary Care
	St. Dominic
	St. Jude's Home for Girls
Health/Medical Aid	Mary Care
	AMMR
	Sophia House
	St. Jude's Home for Girls
Psychosocial support	Families in Action (FIA) ²⁵² , IOM, St. Dominic's, Mary Care, Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago (FPATT), MSDFS ²⁵³
Sexual and Reproductive Health	FPATT
GBV Hotline	FPATT
Livelihood training	FIA, TTV Solidarity Network (TTV SOLNET)
Life Skills	FIA
Technical and Vocational training	FIA
English as a Second Language	FIA
Research	IOM

240. STI_Ref.4:8
241. STI_Ref.4:8
242. STI_Ref.2:8; STI_Ref.4:8; STI_Ref.8:12; STI_Ref.9:9; STI_Ref.17:8; STI_Ref.20:10; STI_Ref
243. STI_Ref.9:9
244. STI_Ref.2:8
245. STI_Ref.2:8; STI_Ref.4:8; STI_Ref.9:9; STI_Ref.17:8
246. STI_Ref.4:8

247. STI_Ref.2:8
248. STI_Ref.8:12; STI_Ref.9:8; STI_Ref.17:8; STI_Ref.29:8
249. STI_Ref.4:8
250. Ministry of Labour
251. Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs
252. Families in Action
253. Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

Interestingly, the categories of VoT clients, in receipt of services, were also probed and it was discovered that shelter services were available for children and adolescent VoTs but not for adults.

Apart from this, only one service provider, reportedly offered psychosocial support for male VoTs.²⁵⁴

Furthermore, some stakeholders endeavoured to extend trauma-informed;²⁵⁵ culturally sensitive;²⁵⁶ rights-based²⁵⁷; tailored²⁵⁸ services and adhere to the principle of consent²⁵⁹ in the provision of services to VoTs.

A few service providers also employed case management techniques in VoT engagements.²⁶⁰

Additionally, some stakeholders stated that they used monitoring and evaluation strategies to gauge the impact and relevance of assistance/ services extended to VoTs²⁶¹. However, they

noted that after care and follow up activities were inconsistent.²⁶²

On the other hand, interviewees referred to critical challenges that undermined and obstructed their efforts. Specifically, they identified insufficient funding²⁶³ and staffing²⁶⁴ as major encumbrances, as well as:

- Shortage of professional staff such as:
 - Investigators
 - Legal officers
 - Data analyst
 - Community liaison officers
 - Case managers/workers
 - Psychologists
 - Counsellors
 - Social workers and
 - Care givers, and bilingual staff.²⁶⁵
- Inadequate placement facilities for children²⁶⁶
- Absence of identification documents for some VoTs²⁶⁷
- Absence of legal guardianship for child VoTs²⁶⁸

254. STI_Ref.4:11
255. STI_Ref.1:13; STI_Ref.4:11; STI_Ref.9:12; STI_Ref.18:16; STI_Ref.20:13; STI_Ref.21:8; STI_Ref.26:12
256. STI_Ref.2:10; STI_Ref.4:11; STI_Ref.5:12; STI_Ref.20:13
257. STI_Ref.2:10; STI_Ref.4:11; STI_Ref.5:12; STI_Ref.9:11; STI_Ref.18:12; STI_Ref.20:13; STI_Ref.21:8; STI_Ref.26:11-12
258. STI_Ref.2:10; STI_Ref.21:7
259. STI_Ref.2:10; STI_Ref.4:11; STI_Ref.20:14; STI_Ref.21:8
260. STI_Ref.2:10; STI_Ref.4:10; STI_Ref.9:10; STI_Ref.20:11
261. STI_Ref.2:12; STI_Ref.5:14 STI_Ref.9:12; STI_Ref.20:15;

STI_Ref.21:9; STI_Ref.25:15; STI_Ref.26:13
262. STI_Ref.1:15; STI_Ref.8:17; STI_Ref.9:12; STI_Ref.20:16; STI_Ref.21:10; STI_Ref.25:15
263. STI_Ref.4:12; STI_Ref.5:13; STI_Ref.20:14; STI_Ref.21:9
264. STI_Ref.1:13-14; STI_Ref.4:12; STI_Ref.18:13; STI_Ref.25:14
265. STI_Ref.2:13; STI_Ref.4:12; STI_Ref.8:19; STI_Ref.12:14; STI_Ref.25:14
266. STI_Ref.2:11
267. STI_Ref.2:11
268. STI_Ref.8:15

- Victim safety concerns²⁶⁹
- Standard Operating Procedures for assisting VoTs and
 - Absent²⁷⁰ or
 - Exists in a general sense and not specific to VoTs²⁷¹
- VoTs lack of trust in authorities.²⁷²

Interviewees also observed that the CTU, the Office of the DPP, CATT, the protective services and service providers are markedly under resourced.²⁷³

4.5.1
Referral Mechanisms

Stakeholder interviews informed of existing mechanisms for referral of VoTs to service providers and, similarly, service providers refer VoTs to other agencies for assistance, as depicted in figure 8.

Figure 8 - VoT Referrals

VoT Referrals to Service Providers by Agencies	Service Provider Referrals to Agencies
CATT ²⁷⁴	CTU
CTU	IOM
Police	
St. Jude’s Home for Girls	
IOM	
PADF ²⁷⁵	
General Public	
State Agencies	

269. STI_Ref.26:12
270. STI_Ref.9:11; STI_Ref.11:7; STI_Ref.18:14
271. STI_Ref.2:11; STI_Ref.5:13; STI_Ref.8:16; STI_Ref.20:15; STI_Ref.25:14
272. STI_Ref.26:12
273. STI_Ref.1:6,15; STI_Ref.7:2; STI_Ref.8:5,9,15
274. Children Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
275. Pan American Development Fund

Nevertheless, one stakeholder informed that referral pathways are unclear and lack structure²⁷⁶.

4.5.2
Training

Generally, stakeholders within the study reportedly received basic sensitization training on counter human trafficking, which was provided mainly by the following organizations²⁷⁷.

- Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU);
- International Office of Migration (IOM);
- Inter-American Development Bank (IADB); and
- Living Waters Community (LWC).

A few stakeholders have also been exposed to advanced training and some organizations²⁷⁸

participated in GBV and protection of refugees and asylum seekers training sessions.

Incidentally, agencies that have not received TiP training expressed interest in the following training areas :

- Train the trainers
- Data collection and analysis
- Victim identification
- Security and
- Victim trauma.

It was further advised that local actors should be trained in the principles of international protection, child protection, safe identification, and referrals²⁸⁰.

276. STI_Ref.4:11
278. STI_Ref.28:12; STI_Ref.29:12; STI_Ref.30:12
279. STI_Ref.1:17; STI_Ref.2:14; STI_Ref.12:19; STI_Ref.8:19; STI_Ref. 23:13
280. STI_Ref.28:3

281. STI_Ref.1:19; STI_Ref.5:20; STI_Ref.8:21; STI_Ref.12:20; STI_Ref.20:21; STI_Ref.25:19; STI_Ref. 28:13
282. Security measures include: restricted access, contractual agreements, confidentiality oaths and policy, awareness of personal responsibility with sensitive data and

4.6
Data and Research

A small number of interviewed stakeholders informed that they collect data on VoTs²⁸¹ and these efforts focused on tracking demographics, maintaining patient/client records, and supervising case management.

It was also noted, in most instances, that the information collection by these agencies is secured²⁸² and anonymized,²⁸³ in advance of sharing.

Nonetheless, it was indicated that standard excel databases²⁸⁴ are utilized to secure data as opposed to software designed specifically for these purposes.

Accordingly, data was shared with the CTU, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS), the courts, CATT, donor agencies and other international agencies, where necessary²⁸⁵.

Apart from this, the below research and data needs²⁸⁶ were highlighted:

disciplinary action if there is a breach.
283. STI_Ref.6:35; STI_Ref.20:21; STI_Ref.25:19; STI_Ref. 28:14
284. STI_Ref.6:35; STI_Ref.5:20; STI_Ref.8:21
285. STI_Ref.7:12; STI_Ref.20:21; STI_Ref.25:20; STI_

- Data collection and analysis support
- Data software
- Staff trained in:
 - o Data analysis, and
 - o Monitoring and evaluation.
- A shared database to:
 - o Facilitate real time access to information and
 - o Avoid duplication of service.
- Development of formal data collection framework for VoTs, with standardized data collection forms, inclusive of referral/ reporting guidelines; and
- Improved communication channels with CTU to identify victims.

Ref.28:14
286. STI_Ref.1:19; STI_Ref.5:21; STI_Ref.20:22; STI_Ref. 28:14

4.7
Upcoming Initiatives

A few stakeholders informed of upcoming TiP initiatives such as:

I. S.A.R.A.H. (Safe-guarding And Rescuing All Humans from trafficking) – This will be an effort of the Office of the Prime Minister and Gender and Child Affairs focused on:

- o Increasing men’s awareness and understanding of the:
 - ☐ Linkages between sexual solicitation and human trafficking, and
 - ☐ Relationships between gender stereotypes, sexual solicitation, and exploitation.
- o Identifying strategies and resources to support the prevention and participation of men in sexual solicitation and exploitation, and facilitate their reporting of instances of TiP; and
- o Forging alliances with key stakeholders to reduce the incidences of sexual solicitation and exploitation.

- 2. Trafficking Hackathon – will be advanced by the LWC. It seeks to identify TiP using software applications.
- 3. Access, Support, and Coordination (ASC) Programme – This involves a collaborative approach amongst the IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR, and UNFPA to support survivors of human trafficking. Thus, it aims to:
 - o Improve national and community-based protection systems knowledge to screen, identify, assist, and re/ integrate survivors of trafficking and Unaccompanied and Separated (UASC);
 - o Increase collaboration amongst government, civil society organizations (CSO)s and United Nations (UN) Agencies, to effectively coordinate, mitigate risks, identify solutions, and tackle xenophobia, discrimination and exploitation;
 - o Increase Government’s, CSOs,’ and UN Agencies’ provision of mental health and psychosocial support, direct assistance, and services options for the empowerment of survivors of trafficking, and those at risk.

- 4. Updated National Referral Mechanisms – the UNODC intends to undertake an exercise to update national referral mechanisms.

CONCLUSIONS

5. CONCLUSIONS

Trinidad and Tobago has in place a legislative framework, which clearly establishes systems to support the advancement of anti-trafficking in persons (anti-TiP) efforts.

Moreover, there are several relevant services which VoTs in this country could access, and upcoming initiatives are promising.

Yet, by the same token, it is essential to harmonize existing laws and complementary ones with the TiP Act, and strict adherence to this Act should be reinforced.

Additionally, interviews revealed evident policy gaps, which should be addressed, urgently. More specifically, migration-related policies should be created to provide an overarching structure within which the issue of TiP could be situated, understood, and engaged.

Institutionally, the role of the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NTFATIP) is pivotal in directing TiP initiatives. Therefore, reactivation of this entity is imperative to successful activities and responses to evolving circumstances.

In like manner, cooperation agreements and partnerships at different societal levels, e.g., government, NGOs, private sector, and community-based groups, are essential for integrated and coordinated approaches to this complex and multifarious phenomenon.

Interestingly, local prosecution and conviction rates reflect international trends. Nevertheless, there is a dire need to expeditiously strengthen these functions and build the capacity of key agencies through requisite training and technological support.

In addition, complicit officials, who are implicated in TiP schemes, should be decisively dealt with through proactive investigations and legal actions. This will contribute to a reduction in compromised institutions and promote renewed public trust in authorities.

Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic emerged as a crosscutting theme that affected various dimensions of TiP responses and interventions. Nonetheless, despite the grave predicament, innovative strategies should be explored to maintain assistance to VoTs, as well as to ensure

that key service providers are sufficiently resourced and operational.

Added to this, long term, sustainable shelter options for both adult and child victims should be identified and the specific situation of male VoTs should be further interrogated to inform evidence-based responses to their specific needs.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

6



6. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the foundation of the national Trafficking in Persons (TiP) Act, which established structures to guide anti-TiP work, several initiatives could be instituted, under varied thematic areas, to support the mandate of the Act and improve ongoing activities.

6.1 Legislation

The main recommendations regarding this area pertained to the TiP Act. Specifically, stakeholders recognized the need to reestablish , review, update, and bolster the Act.²⁸⁸

Some other suggestions included:

1. Consideration of a separate court for TiP matters to expedite trials²⁸⁹ and/or prioritize human trafficking cases;²⁹⁰
2. Provision of dedicated funding and staffing for the Counter-Trafficking Unit (CTU)

to support strengthened capacities and execution of its responsibilities;²⁹¹ and

3. Prioritization of forced labour in the TiP law as opposed to the primary emphasis on sexual exploitation.²⁹²

Additionally, the literature proposed that:

- A broad and comprehensive assessment of the national legal framework should be undertaken to ensure harmonization with TiP legislation and other instruments such as immigration, labour, criminal, employment, and social laws; ²⁹³
- E-justice mechanisms in TiP cases could be considered;²⁹⁴
- The rule of law should be promoted;²⁹⁵
- Universal human rights must be enshrined into legislation;²⁹⁶ and

288. STI_Ref.8:5; STI_Ref.10:2; STI_Ref.17:15; STI_Ref.29:3
289. STI_Ref.7:2
290. STI_Ref.12:7
291. STI_Ref.7:5
292. STI_Ref.6:4; STI_Ref.7:5

293. (UNODC 2006)
294. (UNODC 2021b)
295. (Rietig 2015)
296. (Kappler et al. 2020)

- Laws to lessen reliance on cheap labour should be explored as it could decrease individuals’ risk of becoming victims of trafficking (VoTs).²⁹⁷

6.2 Policy

A robust approach to trafficking in persons requires a directed, multi-pronged strategy. Accordingly, stakeholders emphasized the critical importance of developing a migration policy²⁹⁸, a labour migration policy and an anti-smuggling.²⁹⁹

It was also asserted that a shared policy framework and action plan are integral for:

- Facilitating a comprehensive approach to the issue;
- Appropriately addressing the needs of VoTs; and
- Assisting stakeholders in having a clearer understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and activities.³⁰⁰

297. (UNODC 2021)
298. STI_Ref.1:3; STI_Ref.19:8
299. STI_Ref.6:4
300. STI_Ref.8:24-25; STI_Ref.29:15
301. STI_Ref.18:22

Correspondingly, the creation of a specific policy for VoTs was also recommended.³⁰¹

6.3 Institutional Framework

The literature expounded that, “effective responses to the problem of human trafficking call for collaborative, multiagency, long-term, coordinated, strategic and well-planned action”³⁰² and stakeholders similarly acknowledged that an integrated approach is needed.³⁰³

Accordingly, approval, funding, and implementation of the anti-trafficking National Action Plan for 2021-2025 is of paramount importance³⁰⁴ to provide an overarching framework for anti-TiP efforts and to guide ongoing efforts.

It was further noted that recognition of the seriousness of the issue, appropriate senior-level champions from key ministries, and political will are all necessary factors for effective engagements.³⁰⁵

302. (UNODC 2006:11)
303. STI_Ref.3:16; STI_Ref.5:3
304. STI_Ref.4:21; (US Department of State 2022:547)
305. STI_Ref.6:12; STI_Ref.8:23-34;

6.3.1
Investigation and Prosecution

Cognizant of the reported investigation and prosecution challenges, the following recommendations from interviewees and the literature are proposed:

- Proactive victim identification and screening within vulnerable communities, including migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees, should be increased;³⁰⁶
- TiP investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of traffickers³⁰⁷, inclusive of complicit officials and staff, should be intensified;³⁰⁸
- Trafficking should be investigated and prosecuted using the anti-trafficking law and not as other or lesser crimes;³⁰⁹
- The capacity of law enforcement and

prosecuting authorities should be enhanced to identify and prosecute the crime³¹⁰.

- o This includes appropriate training for police officers on proactive identification, gathering and preservation of trafficking evidence to inform investigations³¹¹
- Victims’ understanding of the criminal justice process should be improved to enhance their cooperation with law enforcement and prosecutors;³¹²
- Information gathering options, such as an online platform for public reports and information on TiP, should be created;³¹³
- Victims’ confidence and trust in local systems should be reinforced;³¹⁴ and
- Public confidence in the authorities should be restored to improve TiP reporting.³¹⁵

306. (US Department of State 2022:547)
307. STI_Ref.2:3; STI_Ref.4:21; STI_Ref.22:16-17
308. (US Department of State 2022:547)
309. (US Department of State 2022:547)
310. STI_Ref.30:16
311. STI_Ref.12:7; (US Department of State 2022:547)
312. (Clawson 2003:37)
313. STI_Ref.2:3
314. STI_Ref.22:16-17

6.3.2
Standard Operating Procedures

Existing research and stakeholders advocate for the introduction and implementation of SOPs and formalized agreements³¹⁶ to:

- Develop shared terminology between agencies;³¹⁷
- Formulate guidelines and procedures for working through cases collaboratively;³¹⁸
- Define agencies’ core roles and responsibilities to victims and to the partnerships;³¹⁹ and
- Formalize interagency human-trafficking support network.³²⁰

315. STI_Ref.26:3
316. STI_Ref.8:18; STI_Ref.14:2; (IOM 2019)
317. (Clawson 2003)
318. (Clawson 2003)
319. (Clawson 2003); (Davy 2015)
320. (Davy 2015:335)
321. STI_Ref.1:6; STI_Ref.6:7; STI_Ref.7:4; STI_Ref.8:4;

6.3.3
Prevention Efforts

Stakeholders expressed a pressing need to augment TiP prevention efforts.³²¹

Additionally, it was indicated that focused and sustained efforts to reduce both the demand side of TiP, i.e., demand for sex, forced labour, and free labour, as well as the supply side, which relates to effective border management,³²² should be pursued.³²³

Apart from this, prevention efforts should be extended to potential victims,³²⁴ prior to departure from their home country.³²⁵ It was also suggested that social media could be useful tool for targeting this population.³²⁶

STI_Ref.13:7; STI_Ref.14:4; STI_Ref.15:5; STI_Ref.23:3;
STI_Ref.24:3; STI_Ref.28:5
322. STI_Ref.11:2; STI_Ref.19:8; STI_Ref.29:3
323. STI_Ref.13:7; STI_Ref.15:5
324. STI_Ref.2:3
325. STI_Ref.8:4; STI_Ref.12:3; (Rosenberg 2008)
326. STI_Ref.8:4

6.3.4
Cooperation and Collaboration

Institutional frameworks are usually highly reliant on strong cooperation mechanisms. The importance of collaboration was also highlighted as it related to meeting the needs of victims of human trafficking.³²⁷

Thus, the following recommendations were drawn from both the literature and stakeholder feedback:

- Interagency relationships should be strengthened to support identification, screening, and referral processes³²⁸. This includes:
 - o Enhanced collaboration amongst national security stakeholders;³²⁹
 - o Closer connections with civil society, given its capacity to reach trafficked individuals;³³⁰

- ☐ Greater collaboration between law enforcement and communities is also needed.³³¹
- o Sufficiently prepare health care and social service providers to identify VoTs as part of their regular clinical practice;³³²
- o Provide incentives to private sector companies to prevent trafficking in persons in their supply chains
- ☐ Civil society and private sector cooperation is vital to addressing supply chain integrity as it could:
 - Stop trafficking for forced labour and other forms of exploitation; and
 - Stymie recruitment and exploitation via the internet.³³³
- ☐ Inclusion of private sector in integrated efforts such as the development of national plans of action could be considered.³³⁴

327. (Clawson & Dutch 2008a:8)
328. STI_Ref.1:3; STI_Ref.7:14; STI_Ref.27:2
329. STI_Ref.21:15; STI_Ref.23:3
330. STI_Ref.5:3

331. STI_Ref.16:16
333. (Dovydaitis 2010); (Schwarz et al. 2016)
334. (UNODC 2020a: 5)

- o Whole of government and whole of community approaches should be adopted.³³⁵
- Points of Contact (POC) within each organization should be identified to streamline interagency collaboration;³³⁶
 - o Development of a coordination platform should be considered.
- Cooperation between the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU), prosecutors, the judiciary, and NGOs should be facilitated and improved to increase the number of cases that proceed to trial;³³⁷
- The Coordinating Committee for Victim Care should be functional and active;³³⁸
- Formal MoUs with domestic violence shelters should be established to ensure not only placement of clients but placement in a facility with a staff trained in human trafficking and sensitive to the needs of victims;³³⁹

335. STI_Ref.3:5
336. (Clawson 2003:31)
337. (US Department of State 2022:547)
338. (US Department of State 2022:547)
339. (Clawson and Dutch 2008a:9)
340. (Rietig 2015)
341. STI_Ref.6:3; STI_Ref.19:8; STI_Ref.21:3; (Rietig 2015)

- Technical assistance should be extended to NGOs; and³⁴⁰
- Greater collaboration and partnerships with local and international partners involved in counter-human trafficking should be forged.³⁴¹

6.3.5
Public Sensitization

There was a clarion call for heightened public sensitization on TiP amongst stakeholders, which was also echoed in the literature.

It was noted that these efforts could create awareness, as well as act as a deterrent to potential traffickers.³⁴² Therefore, the following are recommended:

- Comprehensive public sensitization and education on the issue of TiP, inclusive of the types of trafficking and forms of coercion, should be promoted to improve informed public reporting;³⁴³

342. STI_Ref.22:16
343. STI_Ref.1:21; STI_Ref.3:2; STI_Ref.6:3; STI_Ref.8:5; STI_Ref.9:19; STI_Ref.11:12; STI_Ref.12:3; STI_Ref.18:3; STI_Ref.19:8; STI_Ref.20:25; STI_Ref.22:3; STI_Ref.23:3; STI_Ref.26:3

- o This should target different groupings,³⁴⁴ such as the public, as well as service providers,³⁴⁵ and should be implemented at the community level and amongst community-based organizations³⁴⁶ via workshops.³⁴⁷
- o Could include infomercials, social media postings, and outreach within the tourism sector.³⁴⁸
- o These efforts should involve steps on how to anonymously³⁴⁹ report/inform authorities.³⁵⁰
- o This includes but is not limited to physical and psychological/mental aspects.³⁵²
- o Proactive victim protection among vulnerable communities, including migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees, especially Venezuelans, should be increased.³⁵³
- Victims should not be criminalized, as articulated in the Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking;³⁵⁴
- Victims should be educated and empowered³⁵⁵ to improve their life chances; and
- Accessible, decent, employment options should be offered to VoTs to support the provision of their needs and those of their families.³⁵⁶

6.4
Needs

Several VoT needs were identified within the literature and amongst stakeholders. Accordingly, the following are proposed:

- Efforts should be made to ensure that their safety needs are protected;³⁵¹

344. STI_Ref.7:4; STI_Ref.20:25
345. (Clawson 2003)
346. STI_Ref.6:5; STI_Ref.11:12; STI_Ref.16:16; STI_Ref.22:3;
347. STI_Ref.11:12
348. STI_Ref.20:25; STI_Ref.22:3;
349. STI_Ref.3:3

350. STI_Ref.9:19
351. This recommendation is consistent with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

6.4.1
COVID-19

Regarding the novel complications introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recommended that:

- Law enforcement officials remain vigilant in addressing new and evolving crime patterns and adapt their responses to prevent human traffickers from acting with impunity in the wake of the pandemic;
- Anti-trafficking work should continue to be supported and assistance programmes should adapt to the new and extraordinary circumstances created by the pandemic and its aftermath; and
- Service providers must remain flexible and adjust to evolving environments to meet the needs of their communities.³⁵⁷

352. STI_Ref.27:2
353. (US Department of State 2022:547)
354. OHCHR (2002:6)
355. STI_Ref.2:3
356. STI_Ref.7:6
357. (UNODC 2020b:4)

6.5
Services

VoTs in Trinidad and Tobago could access several services.

Nonetheless, there are still evident avenues for improvement and growth, which informed the recommendations outlined below. Thus, stakeholders and the research suggest:

- Funding sources should be expanded to ensure effective victim service provision.³⁵⁸
This includes but is not limited to:
 - o Sufficient allocation of resources to specialized agencies that respond to the needs of VoTs³⁵⁹ such as the CTU.³⁶⁰
- Adequate housing and shelter for VoTs should be determined and instituted³⁶¹

358. (Davy 2015:335); STI_Ref.2:13; STI_Ref.4:14,21; STI_Ref.9:14; STI_Ref.20:17; STI_Ref.26:16
359. STI_Ref.18:21
360. STI_Ref.8:23; STI_Ref.17:15-16
361. (Clawson 2003); STI_Ref.2:13

- o This should include:
 - Necessary funding arrangement for accommodations;³⁶²
 - Dedicated safe houses for trafficked victims;³⁶³ and
 - Exploration of new partnership opportunities in the areas of affordable housing and medical care.³⁶⁴
- Efforts should be made to improve the quality of victim care—especially for children as follows: ³⁶⁵
 - o Staffing deficiencies should be addressed;³⁶⁶
 - o NGOs, shelters, social services, and law enforcement staff should be sensitized to TiP and TiP protocols³⁶⁷ and trained
- to identify, care for, and communicate with potential VoTs;³⁶⁸
- o The granting of guardianship of children by the court should be expedited to facilitate children’ access to services;³⁶⁹
- o Specific emphasis should be placed on understanding the needs of male victims of human trafficking, how they differ from those of female victims, and effective services for meeting those needs;³⁷⁰ and
- Service providers and law enforcement should employ case managers to:
 - o Effectively manage VoTs cases. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Identifying and making appropriate referrals;³⁷¹

362. (US Department of State 2022:547)
363. STI_Ref.14:6
364. (Davy 2015:335)
365. (US Department of State 2022:547)
366. STI_Ref.1:15; STI_Ref.2:13; STI_Ref.4:14; STI_Ref.18:16; STI_Ref.25:16
367. STI_Ref.18:16

368. (US Department of State 2022:547) STI_Ref.27:13
369. STI_Ref.8:23-24 5
370. (Caliber 2007)
371. (IOM 2019)

- Assisting victims in accessing services; and
- Helping VoTs understand and navigate through the criminal justice, immigration, and human service systems.
- o Advocate on behalf of the victims to other providers and agencies;
- o Educate victims on their rights; and
- o Provide moral and emotional support.³⁷²
- Service providers’ capacities should be strengthened to ensure the protection of victims’ right to privacy and confidentiality;³⁷³
- Bilingual services should be increased;³⁷⁴
- Materials that inform victims about the assistance options and their rights should be developed and made available;³⁷⁵
- o These materials should be offered in the main language spoken by VoTs and migrants;³⁷⁶
- Systems to monitor VoT assistance programs should be created and implemented;³⁷⁷
- o Ideally minimum standards for state and non-state shelters should be developed and used as criteria for accreditation of shelter providers.³⁷⁸
- Risk assessments should be conducted;³⁷⁹ and
- Measures to support the mental health and wellbeing of officers, and by extension service providers, who cater to the needs of VoTs should be instituted.³⁸⁰

372. (Clawson and Dutch 2008b)
373. (McAdam 2021)
374. (US Department of State 2022:547); STI_Ref.25:16
375. (Rosenberg 2008)

376. (Rosenberg 2008)
377. (Rosenberg 2008)
378. (McAdam 2021)
379. STI_Ref.4:14
380. STI_Ref.25:22

6.5.1

Training

More in-depth training, along with refresher sessions were identified as key elements of improved services to VoTs.

Therefore, training for service providers and key stakeholders should include sessions on:

- Train the trainer;³⁸¹
- Prevention of trafficking;³⁸²
- Victim identification;³⁸³
- Development of protocols to identify VoTs;³⁸⁴
- Prosecution of traffickers;³⁸⁵
- Psychosocial care;
- Trauma-informed care;³⁸⁶
- Survivor-centered approach;³⁸⁷
- Case management approach;³⁸⁸
- Protection of the rights of victims;³⁸⁹
- Communication skills, specific to VoTs;³⁹⁰
 - o Inclusive of foreign language skills.³⁹¹
- Human rights and gender sensitive issues;³⁹² and
- Data collection and analysis.³⁹³

381. STI_Ref.1:17
382. (UNODC 2006)
383. (UNODC 2008)
384. (Clawson 2003)
385. (Clawson 2003)
386. (US Department of State 2022:547)
387. STI_Ref.27:13

6.5.2

Referral Mechanisms

Cognizant of the gaps in referral mechanisms, the following are proposed:

- A comprehensive National Trafficking Victim Service Provider Referral List should be created;
 - o This could respond to information gaps between providers and offer a critical resource for enhanced collaboration and information sharing.³⁹⁴
- Functional referral mechanisms should be in place, which prioritizes victims and is premised on the voluntary and informed participation of VoTs;³⁹⁵ and
- Systems should be developed to monitor the implementation of referral mechanisms.³⁹⁶

388. STI_Ref.27:13
389. STI_Ref.27:13
390. STI_Ref.27:13
391. STI_Ref.7:9
392. STI_Ref.7:9
393. STI_Ref.1:19; STI_Ref.7:13
394. (Clawson 2003)

6.6

Data and Research

Relevant, current data on the constantly evolving situation of TiP would provide much needed evidence to inform ongoing and new TiP policies, as well as programmatic and intervention efforts. Accordingly, it is recommended that:

- TiP data should be collected, analyzed, and used to inform TiP activities;³⁹⁷
- Integrated IT database, between key stakeholder agencies such as the CTU and the Immigration Division, could be explored to facilitate the rapid identification of known traffickers and smugglers;³⁹⁸
- Trafficking prevalence studies should be commissioned to:
 - o Measure:
 - ☐ Changes in trafficking over time and
 - ☐ Impacts of interventions.

395. (Rosenberg 2008)
396. (Rosenberg 2008)
397. (Rietig 2015)
398. STI_Ref.23:10, (Rosenberg 2008)
399. (Rosenberg 2008)
400. (Davy 2015)

- o Direct new actions and efforts.³⁹⁹
- Studies on victim attrition levels should be encouraged to ascertain what happens to clients who, for various known and unknown reasons, exit the support programs;⁴⁰⁰
- Longitudinal studies of human-trafficking support programs should be conducted to determine their effectiveness;⁴⁰¹
- Meta evaluations should be considered to assess the impact and effectiveness of human-trafficking support services;⁴⁰²
- Impact indicators should be developed for all elements of anti-TIP programs to monitor efficacy;⁴⁰³
 - o Anonymous feedback mechanisms for project staff, NGO partners and beneficiaries, with online or hard copy forms, could be considered.⁴⁰⁴ and
- Systematic data collection and analysis on the impact of COVID-19 on trafficking in persons should be conducted.⁴⁰⁵

401. (Davy 2015)
402. (Davy 2015)
403. (Rosenberg 2008)
404. (Winrock International 2021)
405. (UNODC 2020b:4)

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APPENDICES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Key Stakeholders

Type of Organization	Name of Organization
Government	1. Children’s Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT)
	2. Ministry of Attorney General and Legal Affairs
	3. Ministry of Education (MoE)
	4. Ministry of Labour- Labour Inspectorate Unit (MoL)
	5. Ministry of National Security, Counter Trafficking Unit
	6. Ministry of National Security, Immigration Division
	7. Ministry of National Security, International Affairs Unit
	8. Ministry of National Security, Strategic Services Agency
	9. Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS)
	10. Ministry of Sport and Community Development (MSCD)
	11. Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs (OPM, GCA)
	12. Tobago House of Assembly (THA)
	13. Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard (TTCG)
	14. Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS)
	15. Trinidad and Tobago Police Service,Victim and Witness Support Unit (TTPS,VWSU)

Type of Organization	Name of Organization
Non-Governmental Organizations	1.Archdiocesan Ministry of Migrants and Refugees (AMMR)
	2. Families in Action (FIA)
	3. Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago (FPATT)
	4. Living Water Community (LWC)
	5. Mary Care Centre
	6. Sophia House
	7. St. Dominic’s Children’s Home
	8. St. Jude’s School for Girls
	9.TTV Solidarity Network (TTV Solnet)

Type of Organization	Name of Organization
Non-Governmental Organizations	1. Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS)
	2. International Organization for Migration (IOM)
	3. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
	4. United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
	5. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC)
	6. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

APPENDIX B

International Conventions and Protocols - Trinidad and Tobago Status

International Conventions/Protocols	Date of Signature, Ratification or Accession
Relating to Human Rights	
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)	1. Children’s Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT)
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination	2. Ministry of Attorney General and Legal Affairs
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (1966)	Accession 8 December 1978
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966)	Accession 21 December 1978
Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	Accession 14 November 1980
United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979) ⁴⁰⁶	Ratified 12 January 1990
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989) ⁴⁰⁷ .	Ratified 5 December 1991
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.	Ratified 25 June 2015

406. General recommendation No. 19 identifies trafficking as a form of violence against women because it puts women at special risk of violence and abuse.

407. Article 39 of the CRC requires States to “take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse.”

International Conventions/Protocols	Date of Signature, Ratification or Accession
Relating to Human Trafficking/Trafficking in Persons	
ILO Convention 29, Forced Labour (1930)	Ratified 24 May 1963
United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) Protocol to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees	Accession 10 November 2000
ILO Convention 105, Abolition of Forced Labour (1957)	Ratified 24 May 1963
Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour 182 (1999) ⁴⁰⁸	Ratified 23 April 2003
United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (2000) Palermo Protocol	Signed 26 September 2001
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime Preamble, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	Signed 26 September 2001
Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	Signed 26 September 2001

408. Prohibits perpetrators from using children under 18 years of age for all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom, forced or compulsory labour, and prostitution.



SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT

AN ANALYSIS OF THE VICTIM CARE ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

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