



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY
COUNTER TRAFFICKING UNIT
ANNUAL REPORT 2014
(to be laid in Parliament)

NS/CTU: 86/5/2

Overview of Trinidad and Tobago's Trafficking in Persons Situation for 2014

The impact of global and regional socio-economic and migration trends was reflected in the type of investigations and cases that came to the attention of the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) in 2014. The attraction to Trinidad and Tobago's economy by migrants seeking a better life is an increasing trend and thus presents increased potential risks for vulnerable, unsettled, and irregular migrants. In the context of human trafficking reports and cases, during 2014, CTU saw some of the impact of the regional socio-economic crisis, with reports of Guyanese migrants found in labour exploitation, and Venezuelan nationals subject to sexual exploitation. While these exploitative situations are not new, they show the intensity and seriousness of the economic crisis in neighbouring countries and the need to warn economic migrants to prevent them from becoming victims of trafficking.

Investigations

For the year 2014, CTU received and investigated 35 reports and oversaw the screening of over 90 persons for human trafficking indicators. Figure 1 shows a summary of the sources of these reports. From these 90 persons, six were identified as victims of trafficking. These included one Trinidad and Tobago national who is a child, who was exploited as a child soldier, three Venezuelan nationals for sexual exploitation, and two Guyanese nationals for labour exploitation. The investigations file for the Guyanese case was submitted to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in December 2014 and is pending instructions.

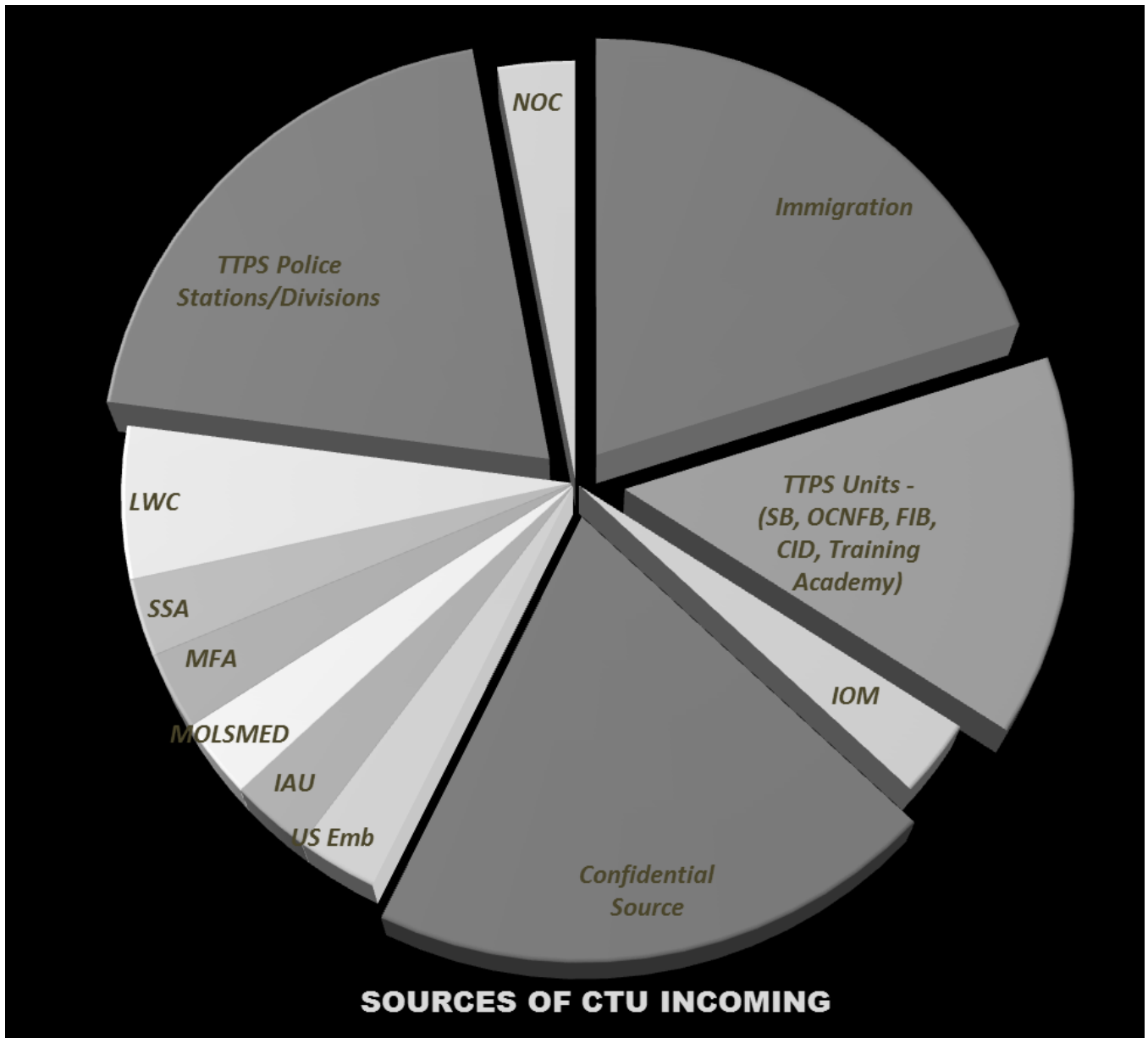


Figure 1

LEGEND FOR FIGURE 1	
NOC	National Operations Centre
TTPS	Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
LWC	Living Water Community
SSA	Strategic Services Agency
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOLSMED	Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise
IAU	International Affairs Unit, Ministry of National Security
US Emb	United States Embassy
IOM	International Organization for Migration

With increased Police manpower and inter-agency collaboration, CTU embarked on eight inter-agency operations during the latter half of 2014. Operations were mainly in response to reports received of trafficking of foreign nationals within Trinidad and Tobago and trafficking of Trinidad and Tobago nationals outside Trinidad and Tobago.

- Joint Operations and Exercises

- **Operation Soup** with Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Western Division – 11 Chinese women found working in brothels in Woodbrook. Since the raid, both premises have been abandoned. One of the women was found to have travelled into Trinidad with a female Chinese national, who had been reported missing since February 2014. The missing girl is still to be found.
- **Operation Tumini** with Customs and Excise Division, Labour Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise, Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard – 3 Guyanese nationals on board an oil tanker. The matter was a wage dispute and the vessel owners sought to resolve the dispute after the CTU raid.
- **Exercise with Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Special Branch** – One 15 year old female Dominican Republic national was found in a strip club among other women of the same nationality. CTU investigations revealed that this was not a human trafficking case as there was no evidence of exploitation.
- **Operation Ruby** with Labour Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise, Inter-Agency Task Force and National Operations Center, Air Division – 13 Guyanese nationals were screened and the business place was found to be in violation of labour laws.
- **Operation Yuma** – 3 female Venezuelan nationals detained by Immigration Division. Two were sent to the Immigration Detention Center by Immigration and one was handed over to CTU. CTU Investigations later revealed that all three women were victims of trafficking.

- International Investigations

- CTU was contacted by UK authorities through the London High Commission and advised of a Trinidad and Tobago female national who was charged for trafficking cocaine from Port of Spain to London and who was claiming to be a victim of human trafficking. After conducting investigations in Trinidad, CTU liaised with UK's National Crime Agency and the British High Commission in Trinidad to provide them with the results of the investigation which disproved the female's claims. The UK was therefore able to pursue the prosecution of the female national on drug charges.
- CTU investigated a report of possible trafficking of a family of five Trinidad and Tobago nationals to Syria by the father. The investigation led two CTU Police Officers to travel to Turkey to repatriate three of the family members (one adult female and two teenaged girls). The CTU collaborated closely with Trinidad and Tobago's Consul in Turkey, the High Commission in London, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago. The investigation revealed that there were indicators of child trafficking by the father to fight with ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria). Further unconfirmed reports revealed that the father and two of the three boys were killed in Syria.

- New Human Trafficking Cases for 2014
 - Two Guyanese nationals (one male and one female) – labour exploitation
 - Three female Venezuelan nationals – sexual exploitation
 - One 12-year old male Trinidad and Tobago national – armed conflict/ISIS

- Status of Human Trafficking Court Cases
 - Committal proceedings began for the court matter of Sargeant Ramlogan vs. Valentine Eastman (an ex-Police Officer who was charged for trafficking three Colombian women from Colombia to Trinidad and Tobago). This matter is continuing in the San Fernando Magistrate Court.
 - In 2014, no persons were arrested for human trafficking offences. Enquiries are ongoing.

Contributions to National and International Legislation

In May 2014, CTU made significant contributions to the text in the Protocol and Recommendation to the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) which was subsequently adopted at the annual International Labour Conference held in Geneva, Switzerland in June 2014. This supplement now includes a significant portion on human trafficking and labour exploitation.

In October 2014, CTU proposed an Amendment to the First Schedule of the Justice Protection Act, Chapter 5:33 to include any Trafficking in Persons Offence under the Trafficking in Persons Act, 2011. A recommendation was submitted for the Minister of Justice, who has the vested authority to make such an amendment to the First Schedule.

Prepared by

Alana Wheeler
Deputy Director
Counter Trafficking Unit