



Ministry of Home Affairs
Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking in
Persons
PRESS RELEASE
June 15, 2023
United States Department of State
Trafficking in Persons Report for
2023

The Ministry of Home Affairs and by extension the Ministerial Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons which is co-chaired by the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Robeson Benn and Hon. Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr. Vindhya Persaud, is pleased to acknowledge the release of the United States Department of State 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report. This report once again gives the Government and People of Guyana a “Tier 1” ranking in its efforts to combat trafficking in persons or human trafficking. This is a testament of the hard work and dedication of individual members of the Task Force, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and all other stakeholders who assisted through increased reporting, training, awareness, proactive investigations, victim protection and international and local partnership.

Our Tier 1 placement in the most recent edition of the Report makes this the seventh (7th) consecutive year that the Government of Guyana has maintained sustained efforts to combat this crime, and more so, during and post a global health pandemic, increased use of online platforms, increasing acts of migrant smuggling and evolving recruitment tactics of human traffickers.

This year’s report which focuses on partnerships, seeks to shed some light on this global and pervasive issue along with collective action taken by States, serves as vital resource tool for

the Ministerial Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons, law- enforcement officials and other stakeholders.

Trafficking in Persons or Human Trafficking remains a deeply entrenched global issue, affecting millions of individuals across borders, age groups and social- economic backgrounds.

Notwithstanding the universal challenges of this crime, the 2023 US State Department Report has recognized our efforts for convicting three (3) traffickers, identifying more victims and referring them to victim support services, consistently implementing a 10 day – reflection period for victims, raising awareness in Indigenous languages, expanding the inclusivity of the Ministerial Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons, establishment of a new interviewing and screening centre, continuous training of law-enforcement officials, initiating a program to screen children in situations of homelessness. Further, the report has included a number of recommendations that will enhance Guyana’s efforts to combat this crime and offer greater support to victims of human trafficking.

I wish to state, that we welcome these recommendations and have commenced efforts to implement same.

TIER PLACEMENTS OF CARICOM MEMBER STATES IN 2023 US TIP REPORT			
TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 2 Watchlist	TIER 3
Guyana, The Bahamas	Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize Jamaica, St. Lucia St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname	Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago	-

Some of the recommendations emanating from the 2023 Report focused on further increasing investigations and prosecution of sex and labour trafficking cases, review existing legislation on labour requirement practices in Guyana, increasing the number of Labour Inspectors, enforce restitution orders, and reduce our reliance on victims to serve as witnesses in prosecution cases.

To this end, the Ministry of Home Affairs and other key Task Force member agencies, and stakeholders will incorporate these recommendations into our work plans.

It should be noted that for the first half of 2023, the Guyana Police Force – Trafficking in Persons Unit investigated twenty- one (21) reported trafficking in persons’ cases, of which, two hundred and forty- four (244) alleged victims were interviewed and screened, twenty- three (23) being under eighteen (18) years of age.

Further, five (5) persons were officially charged and placed before the court between January- May, 2023 for offences ranging from trafficking in persons, assault, forgery of currency notes and the operation of a Brothel. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has recommended that one of the alleged perpetrators, who was charged and sentenced to prison for the operation of a Brothel in May, 2023, be further charged with two (2) counts of trafficking in persons. The Guyana Police Force – TIP Unit will institute these charges shortly.

As we strive to build capacity in this area, over one hundred and seventy (170) law – enforcement and community policing groups were trained on the indicators of human trafficking and migrant smuggling along with national referral mechanisms in place to reporting such acts. Awareness and sensitization was also done with a number of secondary school students in Regions 1,3, 4, and 6. This was a partnership between the Ministry of Home Affairs, Guyana Police Force and Customs Anti- Narcotics Unit (CANU).

While our challenges do remain and continue to evolve, with the increasing use of online platforms by Traffickers to coerce and recruit those most susceptible and vulnerable, the

Ministerial Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons and by extension the Government of Guyana will remain steadfast in its approach to countering this crime.

Therefore, it is imperative that law enforcement officials remain vigilant in addressing new and evolving criminal patterns and adapt their responses to investigate and prosecute human traffickers from acting with impunity.

Moreover, the Government of Guyana deems it paramount that partnerships are continued and as such, the Task Force will be expanded to include more stakeholders in the coming months.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude for the individual efforts of each Taskforce member agency in this fight and wish to assure the general public that the Ministry of Home Affairs and its key partners; Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, Guyana Police Force, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) are committed to investing the necessary resources to strengthen current strategies, and implementing new ones to build and improve on the achievements gained to effectively and efficiently combat this crime and hold traffickers accountable.

We would like to encourage the general public to continue to report suspected instances of trafficking in persons, utilizing our 24Hrs English or Spanish TIP Hotline numbers -227-4083 /623-5030 or 624-0079 (Spanish) or to the nearest police station.

The Task Force remains committed to working with local and international partners such as International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNHCR, United States Embassy and State Department, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Organization of American State (OAS), INTERPOL and Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) to enhance our efforts to combat this heinous crime.

Members of the Ministerial Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons includes:

1. Ministry of Home Affairs (Chair).
2. Ministry of Human Services and Social Security (Co-Chair).
3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

4. Ministry of Amerindian Affairs.
5. Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.
6. Ministry of Natural Resources.
7. Ministry of Labour.
8. Ministry of Legal Affairs and the Chambers of the Attorney General.
9. Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.
10. Guyana Police Force (Criminal Investigations Department (CID) - Trafficking in Persons Unit.
11. Guyana Police Force - Special Branch Department.
12. Guyana Police Force - Central Immigration and Passport Office.
13. Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC).
14. Indigenous People's Commission (IPC).
15. Help and Shelter - Guyana.
16. Food for the Poor Inc - Guyana.
17. Guyana Women Miners Organization (GWMO).

Hon. Robeson Benn, M.P
Minister of Home Affairs