TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT
JULY 2022
MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Dear Reader:

Everyone should be free. And yet, through force, fraud, and coercion, human traffickers violate this most basic right. Traffickers’ exploitative practices affect every country in the world, including the United States, by diminishing and destroying our communities, sense of security, and the global economy. This year’s Trafficking in Persons Report turns the spotlight to more clearly illuminate the impact of human trafficking on our global community and on actions we can take as individuals, and as a society, to combat this deplorable crime everywhere it occurs, especially in the most at-risk communities.

The pages that follow highlight the incredible strides and achievements of survivor leaders and individuals with lived experience of human trafficking, including their role as valued anti-trafficking experts. They built, and continue to sustain, the movement to combat human trafficking in a manner that reflects the realities and needs of those currently experiencing exploitation. However, much work remains to create opportunities for responsibly engaging and elevating survivors’ expertise. Their voices are critical to crafting successful anti-trafficking responses, and we hope the report’s introduction serves as a resource for our global partners seeking to improve their anti-trafficking efforts by integrating survivors’ expertise.

Through the special topic boxes in this report, we explore key issues of grave and urgent concern, including the inequitable impact of human trafficking on vulnerable and marginalized populations.

This year’s report is released in the midst of an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Russia’s senseless continued invasion of Ukraine and its devastating attacks across that country have inflicted unfathomable pain and suffering and forced millions of Ukrainian citizens and others to flee seeking safety. We are deeply concerned about the risks of human trafficking faced by individuals internally displaced by the war, as well as those fleeing Ukraine, an estimated 90 percent of whom are women and children. The food insecurity and other broader effects of Russia’s war exacerbate trafficking risks around the globe.

Let us stand together and press for accountability from those leaders who condone and support human trafficking, create conditions ripe for mass exploitation, and perpetuate this fundamental insult to human dignity. Those that perpetrate, condone, or support this crime must be held accountable.

Throughout the report, a unifying theme emerges—human trafficking affects us all. Its impact ripples across the fabric of our global community. We must work together, and in partnership with survivor leaders, to effectively address this crime.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR OFFICIAL

Dear Reader:

As a critical means to continuously improve anti-trafficking efforts, stakeholders should engage with survivors of human trafficking; to listen to, learn from, and lift the voices of those with lived experience. This year’s introduction centers on survivor engagement and highlights the vital role that survivors of human trafficking play in developing and implementing survivor-led, trauma-informed, and comprehensive victim-centered approaches to human trafficking.

The Department of State continues to prioritize the integration of survivor expertise into our work. Here, the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking has been a vital component in our ability to ensure that the strategies we put in place are victim-centered and trauma-informed. Council members come from diverse backgrounds with distinctive experiences. Their contributions and recommendations are invaluable. It is critical that survivor leaders have a seat at the table, but we need to do more. We also rely on our work with the Human Trafficking Expert Consultant Network—which consists of experts with lived experience of human trafficking. Their assistance has helped us develop survivor-informed programs, policies, and resources for our government and beyond, including the introductory essay of this report. As a movement, we must engage survivors early and often in the development of our policies and programs and learn from stakeholders who prioritize meaningful consultation with those with lived experience, to share best practices globally.

Another key priority, which also requires the counsel of survivors, is increasing our efforts to meaningfully incorporate equity in our anti-trafficking work. For example, systemic racism continues to create socioeconomic inequalities that traffickers exploit. This year’s country narratives prioritize integrating an equity-based approach, including by enhancing our reporting on underserved communities and assessing delivery of justice and services to victims among these populations. We are committed to drawing attention to the vulnerabilities that human traffickers routinely exploit, especially as they pertain to individuals from marginalized or underserved communities, and ensuring governments are able to identify and assist all victims. As you read through the report, I also urge you to look closely at the special interest boxes that highlight forced labor and the transition to clean energy, how the climate crisis increases trafficking risks of people everywhere, and the harmful costs associated with the People’s Republic of China’s Belt and Road initiative.

Through these partnerships and listening to the expertise of those with lived experience, we can continue to improve our anti-trafficking efforts even in the face of an unconscionable war of choice placing millions at risk, historically high levels of displaced persons around the globe, economic anxiety, and the disruptions of climate change. Despite the significant challenges, the global community has been steadfast in our anti-trafficking efforts. We will press on in our efforts and look forward to doing so together.

Sincerely,

Kari Johnstone
The Government of Guyana fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The government continued to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts during the reporting period, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Guyana remained on Tier 1. These efforts included identifying more victims and referring them to services, increasing investigations and prosecutions, drafting and funding a National Action Plan (NAP) for 2021-2025 with input from survivors, training diplomats, and conducting a campaign to inform migrants of the Spanish-language hotline. Although the government meets the minimum standards, it did not convict any traffickers for the first time in four years. It did not formally approve standard operating procedures (SOPs) to identify victims, provide sufficient security for trafficking victims at shelters, provide enough Spanish-language interpreters, identify any victims among the vulnerable Haitian population, or adequately oversee recruitment agencies.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS: Increase prosecutions and convictions in sex and labor trafficking cases and pursue them under the Combating Trafficking in Persons Act of 2005, including for cases involving child victims. * Ensure security for victims, especially those residing in government shelters, and their relatives. * Proactively screen vulnerable populations, including Haitian migrants and Cuban medical workers, for trafficking indicators, refer them to services, and ensure potential victims are not deported without screening. * Formally approve and implement victim SOPs and fund specialized victim services, particularly for child, adult male, and Venezuelan victims in their native language, including for indigenous populations. * Increase the number of Spanish speakers supporting anti-trafficking efforts. * Reduce delays in investigations, court proceedings, and pretrial detention of suspects. * Reduce the reliance on victims to serve as witnesses in prosecutions. * Ensure migrants wishing to change jobs are able to do so without relying on their previous employer. * Formally approve and fund the 2021-2025 National Action Plan. * Reduce police abuses during raids and hold officers accountable. * Investigate trafficking cases in remote regions of the country and trafficking using online platforms. * Hold convicted traffickers, including complicit officials, accountable by pursuing significant sentences in court. * Prohibit recruitment and placement fees charged to workers. * Increase the number of labor inspectors and fines for labor violations. * Enforce restitution judgments for trafficking victims. * Undertake systemic monitoring of anti-trafficking efforts and publish the results. * Renew implementation of a data-sharing system in coordination with an international organization.

PROSECUTION
The government maintained law enforcement efforts. The Combating Trafficking of Persons Act of 2005 (Act) criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of three years to life imprisonment. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape.

The government reported initiating investigations in 38 cases involving 57 suspects, 46 for sex trafficking and 11 for labor trafficking, compared with 31 new cases (23 for sex trafficking and eight for labor trafficking) in 2020. The government continued one sex trafficking investigation from the previous reporting period. The government reported it initiated prosecutions against
three suspected traffickers, one for sex trafficking and two for labor trafficking, compared with one new prosecution for sex trafficking in 2020 and three prosecutions in 2019. Authorities ceased prosecution of one alleged sex trafficker following the suspect’s death. Authorities continued prosecutions against two defendants, one for sex trafficking and one for labor trafficking; courts dismissed the labor trafficking case in December 2021 for insufficient evidence. Authorities did not convict any traffickers, compared with convicting one trafficker for each of the past three years. The government did not report any new investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking offenses. In February 2022, media reported accusations from 20 Venezuelan women that police had assaulted and robbed them during a raid on a hotel where police suspected trafficking was taking place. The government did not report on the appeal of a former police officer convicted of sex trafficking and released on bail in 2016; the appeal was still pending at the end of the reporting period.

The government reported conducting surveillance and several raids of commercial sex establishments and bars during the reporting period, primarily in interior mining areas. The Guyana Police Force (GPF) Counter-Trafficking Unit did not have a fixed, discrete budget. Two key entities prosecuted criminal matters in Guyana: the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) prosecuted felonies such as murder and rape at High Court trials, and the GPF prosecution unit prosecuted hybrid offenses, including trafficking, in the Magistrates Court. The government did not have a specialized trafficking court. Police prosecutors were not licensed attorneys, but some had law degrees and received specialized training in legal procedure. The government advised GPF prosecutors to request the advice and guidance of the DPP to strengthen cases for prosecution before initiating legal proceedings, but the government reported this was not often done. The Act also required witness testimony of victims in order to prosecute trafficking cases. The government reported both of these factors contributed to the low prosecution rate. The government also stated that victims’ distrust in law enforcement, prosecutors, and the judicial system; the inability to guarantee the safety of victims and their relatives; language barriers; and delays in investigations were challenges in prosecuting trafficking. The judicial process remained slow, with trafficking and other major criminal trials taking an average of two years and up to three years to complete due to shortages of trained court personnel, postponements at the request of the defense or prosecution, allegations of bribery, poor case tracking, and delays in preparing cases for trial. The government temporarily shifted some court proceedings to virtual hearings due to the pandemic. The government trained law enforcement, military, and labor officials in calendar year 2021 but did not disaggregate the data for the current reporting period. In March 2022, the government agreed to a protocol to accede to the Caribbean Regional Security System, which provides mutual assistance and a collective response to security threats. The government reported that the Ministry of Home Affairs and the GPF were assisting officials in a neighboring country with information for one of the new investigations still underway at the end of the reporting period.

PROTECTION
The government maintained protection efforts. The government screened 288 potential victims and identified 216 victims; NGOs identified 15 victims. Of the identified victims, 193 were women and 14 were girls exploited in sex trafficking; five women, 10 men, six girls, and three boys were exploited in labor trafficking. The sex trafficking victims included 22 Guyanese, 166
Venezuelans, five Jamaicans, two Cubans, and one Indian; the remaining victims were from unspecified countries. The labor trafficking victims included six Guyanese, 10 Venezuelans, three Cubans, two Brazilians, two Jamaicans, and one Indian national. This compared with the identification of 199 victims by the government and an additional five victims by NGOs in 2020 (127 sex trafficking victims and 77 labor trafficking victims). The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security’s (MHSSS’s) Counter-Trafficking in Persons (C-TIP) Unit identified victims in cooperation with the GPF and provided social welfare and assistance to victims. The C-TIP Unit had five staff members; the government reported this was insufficient to effectively undertake its work. In August 2021, the government publicly stated it planned to expand the C-TIP Unit but had not done so by the end of the reporting period. The government reported allocating the C-TIP Unit in 2021 a budget of 52.44 million Guyanese dollars (GYD) ($243,900). In fiscal year 2020, the government reported the C-TIP Unit received a budgetary allocation of 25.86 million GYD ($120,270). In cooperation with an international organization and a foreign donor, authorities developed and began use of, but did not finalize, SOPs for victim identification. The international organization also reported police did not adhere to a requirement to give potential victims a reflection period, and in some cases, officials interviewed potential victims at police stations near the alleged perpetrators.

The government and NGOs reported they each referred all victims identified to available services, compared with the government referring 100 victims in 2020 and 99 victims in 2019. The informal referral procedures used by the GPF, Ministry of Labor inspectors, and the Ministry of Natural Resources required these entities to involve the C-TIP Unit in all suspected trafficking cases. The government reported the MHSSS monitored and evaluated its victim care services to ensure it administered them equitably but did not provide reports of these evaluations. The government reported all 216 victims it identified received some form of assistance. The government reported available services victims used included counseling and guidance, medical services, legal aid services, shelter, food, clothing, translation, education and training opportunities, facilitation to employment if available, and repatriation and reintegration. The government reported it repatriated one Venezuelan, one Jamaican, and one Indian national, all of whom were sex trafficking victims. The government reported it provided free or subsidized legal advice and representation to people unable to afford an attorney, including trafficking victims. The government additionally reported it provided victims with legal assistance. NGOs provided translation and reported that a lack of Spanish-language speakers across all government agencies negatively impacted the government’s ability to engage and serve trafficking victims and vulnerable communities.

For the second consecutive year, the government operated and fully funded three shelters for trafficking victims that offered specialized care, including food, training, translation, legal services, medical services, and psychological therapy. Of these, there was one shelter dedicated for male victims. The government also continued to subsidize two shelters run by NGOs, including one for child trafficking victims. For child victims, the MHSSS provided intake counseling and then placed victims either in the shelter or in children’s homes operated by the government. The government reported it provided 62.43 million GYD ($290,370) in subsidies to an NGO-managed shelter providing housing for adult female trafficking and gender-based violence victims and another for child trafficking victims, a slight increase from 62.35 million GYD ($290,000) in 2020. The NGO shelters provided victims with the same range of services
as the government-operated shelters. The government reported shelter services were not time-limited; victims staying at shelters remained between one week and three years. The government reported at least 32 victims chose to stay in a shelter; the government offered alternative housing for other victims. The government reported social workers maintained contact with those victims who declined to stay in shelters. The government reported it tested victims for COVID-19 prior to entry and gave them personal protective equipment. Victims could leave shelters at will and choose between shelter options, although shelters had curfews and other security measures. However, some NGOs reported authorities did not allow victims to leave the shelters at will. The government encouraged foreign and Guyanese victims to move into government-provided shelters to reduce the chance of witness intimidation and also encouraged NGO chaperones in cases where there was a suspected security threat to the victims. In addition, although the MHSSS reported government-run shelters were safe with the GPF providing security, some NGOs reported the government-run shelters did not have police or other security guards and victims had fled shelters due to security concerns. Foreign and Guyanese victims received the same access to care and assistance. Victim assistance – including shelters – and a lack of trauma-trained staff remained serious concerns, especially in areas outside the capital and for Venezuelan, child, and male victims.

According to authorities, law enforcement officials and social workers screened all individuals for trafficking indicators during raids of adult entertainment venues for commercial sex violations, and authorities did not arrest victims identified during such operations. The government reported it added immigration officers at transit points during the reporting period. However, press reports in March 2022 indicated potential Haitian victims illegally in the country may have been arrested, fined, and deported without screening for trafficking indicators; officials also did not screen sufficiently for trafficking indicators among other at-risk populations, including Venezuelans, Cubans, and those working in the mining sector. Media also noted the discriminatory nature of the government’s treatment of Haitian migrants as compared with those of other nationalities. By the end of the reporting period, the government had not renewed a data sharing agreement with an international organization to collect data from at-risk populations, including migrants. The government reported it did not require victims to participate in investigations or prosecutions in order to access protection services. The Witness Protection Act of 2018 provided a legal framework for the protection of witnesses in trafficking investigations and prosecutions. In previous reporting periods unaffected by the pandemic, courts ordered some trafficking hearings or trials to be partially closed to the public to protect victims’ privacy and identities, and the government strongly advised the media to avoid taking photos of victims. The MHSSS funded transportation costs and police escorts for victims staying outside a shelter who were willing to attend court proceedings. The government reported victims provided testimony via video or recorded statements during the reporting period due to the pandemic. The government reported the quality of saved video recordings was generally poor and often compromised the viability of video evidence in trafficking prosecutions. Authorities offered victims psychological therapy before and after trial proceedings to help prevent re-traumatization. Some NGOs reported authorities re-traumatized some victims during questioning. The government reported it provided legal support for six victims during the prosecution of traffickers. The government reported the remaining 225 victims chose to participate minimally in the investigation process and those investigations were unable to proceed to prosecution; NGOs noted some victims may have declined to participate after
receiving a pay-off from the trafficker. Although the law provided for restitution, the government reported a trafficker ordered to pay restitution in the previous reporting period did not do so; the law did not provide a mechanism to enforce the judgment. The government reported that the appeal of a 2017 case in which the government required the trafficker to pay restitution without imprisonment, a penalty inconsistent with the law, was still pending at the end of the reporting period. The government could grant foreign victims temporary residence status and work permits but received no requests for such benefits during the reporting period. Authorities offered deportation relief to eight foreign victims – three Jamaicans and five Cubans – compared with 10 in 2020 and significantly fewer than the 135 foreign victims in 2019. Deportation relief allowed a victim to remain in the country regardless of being in breach of immigration laws; Venezuelans have been allowed to remain automatically since 2018. Foreign victims received services irrespective of their cooperation with law enforcement, their participation in a trial, or conviction of the trafficker. The government regularly screened foreign potential victims for trafficking indicators before deportation.

**PREVENTION**

The government maintained efforts to prevent trafficking. The Ministerial Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons (the Task Force), co-chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs and the MHSSS, coordinated national interagency anti-trafficking efforts. The Task Force also included four NGOs. The government reported it consulted with trafficking survivors as it formulated and implemented its law, regulations, policies, and programs. The technical arm of the Task Force included representatives (technical advisors, legal assistants, social workers) of the Ministers who sat on the task force and suggested anti-trafficking activities and engagements, including trainings. Observers reported the Task Force was effective in coordinating anti-trafficking efforts. The Task Force met monthly during the reporting period, in addition to emergency meetings as needed, while the action sub-committee met frequently to review operations.

The government drafted and began to implement a NAP for 2021-2025; however, the NAP remained pending with the Cabinet for final approval at the end of the reporting period. The government allocated approximately 18.5 million GYD ($86,050) in 2021 for the implementation of activities outlined in the draft NAP. The government reported it allocated separate budgets for operations, awareness campaigns, and other activities outlined in the NAP for other agencies, such as the GPF and Guyana Geology and Mines Commission. The Task Force implemented a Code of Conduct of ethical standards for its members, including law enforcement officers. The government operated three 24/7 hotlines, two in English and one in Spanish, to report human trafficking. The hotlines received 21 reports during the reporting period that led to the identification of victims, their referral to care, and criminal investigations of traffickers. The government reported calls to the Spanish hotline were infrequent and concluded that Spanish-speaking migrants were unaware of this hotline; the government launched an information campaign in the city of Bartica – a primary corridor to mining areas in which human trafficking frequently occurs – to advise migrants of the Spanish hotline, increasing the number of calls from 20 prior to the establishment of the Spanish hotline to 39 afterwards. Observers noted that cell phone coverage in many mining areas was poor. The government did not undertake any systemic evaluations or research to assess the impact of its anti-trafficking efforts; it published a press release highlighting its efforts and progress.
The Task Force reported it planned and executed several sensitization and awareness sessions across the country. The government reported it collaborated with several NGOs and some private sector companies to conduct awareness campaigns that targeted government workers, NGOs, IOs, the private sector, and members of the general public. The government undertook extensive consultations to ensure content portrayed a diverse cultural background. The government reported campaign materials were readily available, cost-free, and published in English, Spanish, French, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese. The government reported it also contributed to NGOs and international organizations’ awareness campaigns, including for foreign government officials. The government reported it conducted outreach missions to regularize the immigration status of migrant communities at risk of trafficking, especially Venezuelans and Cubans, through registration or extensions of stay. The government reported it provided training to its diplomats. The government reported it reduced demand for commercial sex by educating the public about the illegality of commercial sexual activities. The Sexual Offences Act criminalized sexual contact with a child younger than 16 years old. The government reported there were no reports of child sex tourism in the country or by its nationals abroad during the reporting period.

The Recruitment of Workers Act and the Employment Exchanges Act provided the legislative framework for labor recruitment, but the government did not have any laws prohibiting employers, recruiters, or labor agents from charging workers recruitment fees, switching contracts without the workers’ consent, or withholding wages as a means of keeping workers in a state of compelled service, despite an influx of in-country recruitment agencies targeting the domestic labor force for the country’s burgeoning oil sector. The government also reported migrant workers who wished to change employers needed to first obtain a new work permit from the Ministry of Home Affairs; the previous employer had to officially inform the Ministry of Home Affairs Immigration Support Services that the employee was no longer employed and requested the cancellation of the work permit or visa before the new employer could submit an application. Labor officers trained on trafficking frequently conducted impromptu visits to work sites and business premises in the mining and logging districts and in the capital city to investigate suspect labor practices and possible violations of these acts. However, observers noted the fines for labor violations were low and the number of labor inspectors was insufficient to adequately carry out inspections. The government reported it had a NAP for the Elimination of Child Labor 2019-2025 to combat child forced labor. The government also reported it conducted awareness campaigns in the 10 administrative regions to encourage the reporting of forced labor and promoted public messaging on the dangers of child labor.

**TRAFFICKING PROFILE:** As reported over the last five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Guyana, and traffickers exploit victims from Guyana abroad. Traffickers exploit victims in labor trafficking in mining, agriculture, forestry, domestic service, and in shops. The government reported 78 percent of traffickers in 2020 were men, predominantly Guyanese; 14 percent of traffickers were from Venezuela, while less than 3 percent were Dominican and Haitian. NGOs reported traffickers are often middle-aged men who own or operate nightclubs. Some traffickers are also family members of the victims. Migrants, young people from rural and indigenous communities, children, and those without education are the most at risk for human trafficking. Women and children from Guyana, Brazil, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Suriname, and Venezuela become sex trafficking victims in mining.
communities in the interior and urban areas. An NGO reported in 2021 an increasing number of
young, indigenous girls are being taken from Bolivar state in Venezuela to Guyana, where
traffickers exploit them in commercial sex. NGOs also reported trafficking networks operated
by illegal armed groups known as “sindicatos” in Delta Amacuro state in Venezuela; NGOs
reported these groups lead members of the indigenous Warao community into Guyana to work
long shifts in illegal mines with no medical care despite experiencing curable common health
issues. Warao women are recruited to work as cooks in the mines but are often forced into
commercial sex or exploited by illegal armed groups. While both sex trafficking and labor
trafficking occur in remote interior mining communities, limited government presence in the
country’s interior renders the full extent of trafficking there unknown. The government reported
most Cuban workers in the country were medical doctors who were paid by the Cuban
government, while the government provided housing and airfare. Some Cuban nationals
working in Guyana may have been forced to work by the Cuban government. Traffickers exploit
Guyanese nationals in sex and labor trafficking in Suriname, Uruguay, Jamaica, and other
Caribbean countries.