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# A Media Analysis of the Coverage of Youth Involvement in Crime and Violence and Trafficking in Persons (June 2021 to June 2023) in the Eastern Caribbean

**CariSECURE 2.0**



This report was produced by the Media Institute of the Caribbean for the UNDP as part of the CariSecure 2.0 initiative by USAID.

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The Research team included journalists and data gatherers across the Eastern Caribbean.

[www.mediainstituteofthecaribbean.com](http://www.mediainstituteofthecaribbean.com)

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# ACRONYMS

<b>ACM</b>	Association of Caribbean Media Workers
<b>CariSECURE 2.0</b>	Strengthening Evidence-Based Decision-Making for Citizen Security in the Caribbean
<b>CATT</b>	Children’s Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organization
<b>CS2.0</b>	CariSECURE 2.0
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>CTIP</b>	Counter Trafficking in Persons
<b>CTU</b>	Counter Trafficking Unit
<b>CPU</b>	Child Protection Unit
<b>HERCTIP</b>	Heal Empower Rise Counter Trafficking in Persons
<b>GOTT</b>	Government of Trinidad and Tobago
<b>ID</b>	Immigration Division
<b>IGOs</b>	Inter-Governmental Organizations
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>MIC</b>	Media Institute of the Caribbean
<b>MoNS</b>	Ministry of National Security
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>RBPF</b>	The Royal Barbados Police Force
<b>RGPF</b>	The Royal Grenada Police Force
<b>TIP</b>	Trafficking in Persons
<b>TTPS</b>	Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>USAID</b>	US Agency for International Development
<b>VWSU</b>	Victims and Witness Support Unit

# 1

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The role of media in covering stories of trafficking in persons and youth involvement in crime and violence is multifaceted and crucial as media coverage can bring attention to the issues of trafficking in persons (TIP) and youth involvement in crime and violence, making the public more aware of the solutions, prevalence, causes and consequences of these social issues.

Through various media channels such as news articles, documentaries, and investigative reports, the media can shed light on the complexities of these issues and their impact on individuals and communities. By leveraging their platforms and resources effectively, media outlets can contribute to efforts to prevent exploitation, protect vulnerable populations, and promote justice and accountability.

Conducting a media analysis of journalistic work on the topics of youth involvement in crime and trafficking in persons (TIP) will allow for insights in prevalent narratives, framing, and language used by journalists and media outlets, which in turn shapes public perception and discourse on these thematic areas.

By analyzing the journalistic pieces, researchers can identify patterns and trends in media coverage, including how these issues are contextualized, what the recurring themes or stereotypes are, and what biases, if any, exist.

Media analysis can provide evidence to support calls for more nuanced or comprehensive coverage of these issues, or to address any misrepresentations or harmful stereotypes perpetuated by the media thereby influencing policy and advocacy.

By examining the coverage of these issues, journalists can identify areas for improvement in their reporting practices, such as ensuring accuracy, avoiding sensationalism, and providing more diverse and inclusive perspectives.

Overall, media analysis of journalistic work on human trafficking and youth involvement in crime and violence serves as a valuable tool for understanding, critiquing, and ultimately improving both media representation and public discourse on these social issues.

# 2

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Crime and violence amongst youth (15-29 years) is one of the key bottlenecks to development in the Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> While there is a dearth of timely, disaggregated and comprehensive youth crime data, some existing information suggests that youth are both the greatest perpetrators and victims of violent crimes in the region (ibid). Economic challenges, including a rigid and inflexible labour market, have contributed to a cycle in which young people struggling with the lack of economic opportunities turn to illegal activities and crime. Prolonged social protection challenges result in increases in youth crime, violence, and victimization further down the line.<sup>2</sup> Gender also appears to be a critical factor; while males appear to be both the majority of victims and perpetrators of violent crimes, females are much more likely to be victims than they are to be perpetrators.

In addition to the chronic problem of youth crime and violence, trafficking in persons (TIP) appears to be becoming more prevalent in the Caribbean, most recently linked to the crisis of forced migration from Venezuela. While the paucity of crime data is also present regarding human trafficking, anecdotal evidence suggests that youth are among the most impacted by these crimes.<sup>3</sup> Survey analysis<sup>4</sup> of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) also points to cross-country differences based on idiosyncratic push and pull factors that vary between countries. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these underlying issues: preliminary findings from a recent global report<sup>5</sup> suggest that trafficking has been pushed further underground, creating a more insidious threat to potential victims and to countries' achievement of their SDG targets.

The CariSECURE 2.0 project responds to the citizen security issues of youth crime and violence, and TIP by employing a multi-pronged, human rights-based approach designed to improve national capacities for crime reduction, building upon the data gathering and analytical capacities provided to national police forces under the CariSECURE 1.0 project. The project will take a targeted approach, working with key countries in the region according to the specific needs and capacities identified during the implementation of CariSECURE 1.0.

Specifically, the project will work at the regional, national, and community levels in Barbados, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada to respond to and reduce youth involvement in crime and violence by continuing to build national capacities for evidence-based decision-making among stakeholders in the youth sector.

The project will also develop and implement Trafficking in Persons reduction initiatives while bolstering state capacity to facilitate timely and effective prosecution, with an initial focus on Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, St Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.

An innovative approach to the design of evidence-based, sensitive and human-rights-based policies on

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1 Crime and Youth Unemployment in the Caribbean, Wong, J and Ramakrishnan, IMF, 2017

2 The Challenges of Protecting Youth From Crime and Violence in a Pandemic, UNODC, 2021

3 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, Combating child sex tourism. 2013

4 Exploratory Assessment of Trafficking in Persons in the Caribbean Region, IOM, 2010

5 The Effects of the COVID19 Pandemic on Trafficking in Persons and Responses to the Challenges, UNODC, 2021

youth involvement in crime and violence and TIP, will be to recognize the unique role of the media within the context of Caribbean societies. Media reports can generate meaningful real time data about the multiple potential effects of crime and violence on any particular vulnerable group. Furthermore, social media has strong potential to mobilize people, particularly young people, to reflect on issues, build consensus and to take collective action.

Media outlets can bring critical attention to the issues of human trafficking and youth involvement in crime, by reporting on specific cases, trends, and the broader societal impact, the media can educate the public on issues, the legal frameworks in place to combat these issues, and the ways in which individuals and communities can get help and help to prevent the issues. Regular media coverage of how authorities are handling cases of human trafficking and youth involvement in crime serves as a public form of accountability. It ensures that law enforcement, government bodies, and NGOs remain vigilant in their efforts to combat these issues, via its groundbreaking reports based on research, evidence and facts, the media is foundational.

One of the key challenges faced in the Caribbean is that often the model of journalism reflects existing policy responses to the problems of crime and violence and other citizen security-related issues based on press releases, partial information, stereotypes, quick fixes. Any effort to shift course in this field requires engaging the journalism industry at the levels of media ownership, editorial boards and individual journalists.

The project therefore will encourage the countries news outlets and journalists to cover issues related to youth involvement in crime and violence and TIP from a sensitive and human rights-based perspective and build their capacity to do so in an informed, balanced, objective and insightful manner. It will also highlight the important role played by both mainstream and social media in raising awareness of issues related to crime and violence and challenge social media practitioners to design innovative techniques for social mobilization to enhance citizen security. Countries for Media Review are:

1. Antigua and Barbuda
2. Barbados
3. Grenada
4. St. Lucia
5. St. Vincent & the Grenadines
6. Trinidad and Tobago



# 3

## METHODOLOGY



## Media Story Collection

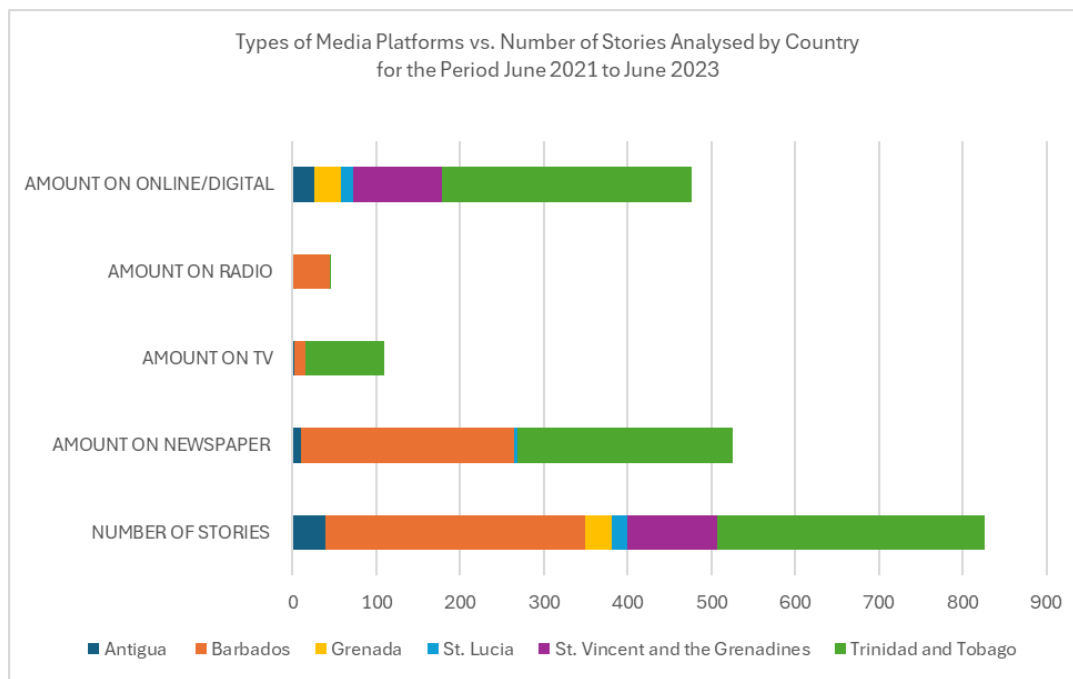
A team of eleven in-country researchers and data gatherers were deployed in each of the six countries in this study. They searched media archives at media houses as well as online, to obtain as many copies of articles and broadcasts (i.e. newspapers, television, radio and digital online) as possible for the period of June 2021 to June 2023. This included radio, television, newspapers and digital<sup>6</sup>. Two lead analysts then reviewed eight hundred and fifteen (815) news pieces on TIP (310 news stories) and Youth in Crime (415), analyzed the trends and story angles to determine the extent of the coverage, the type of reporting, the format of the stories, and the variety of sources used related to the topics.

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF STORIES	AMOUNT ON NEWSPAPER	AMOUNT ON TV	AMOUNT ON RADIO	AMOUNT ONLINE/DIGITAL (Newspapers are also online)
Antigua	39	10	2	1	26
Barbados	310	254	13	43	0
Grenada	32	0	0	0	32
St. Lucia	19	5	0	0	14
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	107	0	0	0	107
Trinidad and Tobago	319	489	94	2	489

**Table 1 – The table above shows the number of news reports analysed from each of the countries in the report**

In the analysis, Digital and Online is a combination of digital stories republished from newspapers as well as unique stories published on online platforms inclusive of Facebook and digital news sites. There was some duplication but this must be accounted for in order to review how the stories are amplified (i.e. were they edited for online publication), the potential audience reach and the public sentiment (i.e. as with social media publication). The analysis of these media stories would effectively allow for an examination of the effectiveness and impact the role of the media is fulfilling. Media is seen as a vital tool for education, advocacy, policy development, and fostering public engagement. In understanding how TIP and Youth in Crime and Violence are represented in the public sphere and how these representations are shaped, a determination can be made for areas of improvement, while also citing stories which are effective.

<sup>6</sup> Digital is defined as online inclusive of media websites, social media, online websites.



A snapshot of the number of the data obtained is represented below and illustrates that Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago yielded the most stories analyzed

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF STORIES	RESEARCH AREA
Antigua	39	Trafficking in Persons Reports
Barbados	44	Trafficking in Persons Reports
Barbados	266	Youth Involvement in Crime and Violence
Grenada	32	Youth Involvement in Crime and Violence
St. Lucia	19	Trafficking in Persons Reports
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	107	Youth Involvement in Crime and Violence
Trinidad and Tobago	319	Trafficking in Persons Reports

**Table 2 – Number of stories from each country analysed for this report.**

An examination of other sources of information gathered from interviews and one-on-one interactions was also done as it relates to Youth in Crime and Violence and Trafficking in Persons (TIP). Many of these available sources of information stemmed from government agencies or stakeholders who were supporting efforts to mitigate the issues. The main stakeholder was USAID.

A media monitoring subscription service with a news database was accessible for Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados which allowed for much better data collection and in-depth analysis of the key themes. Trinidad and Tobago had the most coverage on TIP but this may be due to the size of its media market and the number of media houses which far surpasses those of the other countries in this report. This is further explained in the media ecosystem overview.



## Desk Research

The Media Institute of the Caribbean developed a library of available information and reference material on Youth in Crime and Violence and Trafficking in Persons (TIP) based on other research within the region which date as far back as 2013. These are detailed in the bibliography. It was evident that the issues of Youth in Crime and Violence and Trafficking in Persons (TIP) have been on governments' agenda<sup>7</sup> as matters which require attention but there seems to be a lack of a systematic approach involving all stakeholders, where effective implementation has been devised.

This research shows a gap with non-governmental and civil society organizations where data is not captured and the evaluation of initiatives is not recorded. Data and information from these entities who work in the communities to alleviate the risk and circumstances related to youth involved in crime and victims of human trafficking could be insightful and instructive. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, the NGO / CSO landscape is far more developed than the other countries in this report as there are many more of these organizations and several of them are properly structured with clearly defined mission statements, governance procedures and human resource allocation.

## Interviews

Expert interviews were done with thirty-six (36) individuals representing journalists, members of law enforcement, members of civil society and academics. These stakeholder groups could offer insight and other information related to TIP and youth involvement in crime. The interviews were designed to gain a better understanding of the environment to ensure the media analysis would be done within an accurate context. Members of law enforcement, civil society organizations and academia who are intricately familiar with localized matters of youth involvement in crime and violence and human trafficking, would be able to tell if the media's coverage of these issues are accurate, fair, responsible and sufficiently informs the public. The key findings from the interviews were recorded under key thematic areas of this report. This will allow for improved media training where these obstacles can be highlighted alongside recommendations to produce stories as solutions journalism narratives.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
Journalists	21
Media Managers	6
Members of Law Enforcement	3
Experts / Academia	3
Members of Civil Society	3

**Table 3 – Stakeholders interviewed for this report**

<sup>7</sup> CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy 2013, Securing the Region

## Surveys

Based on a survey done with journalists by the Media Institute of the Caribbean for the period 2021 to 2023 the regions suffers from a severe lack of data. To help ensure that the hypotheses developing out of the analysis were accurate, we employed two online surveys as a random dipstick<sup>8</sup> method to gauge public sentiment on

1. How they consume media which would support the media and information ecosystem assessment which is further detailed in this report
2. Citizen security and their level of trust

These were promoted via the team of researchers' WhatsApp groups as well as the online platforms for the Media Institute of the Caribbean and UNDP Eastern Caribbean. ([Appendix 1](#))

## 3.1 Overall Findings

### Lack of Depth and Analysis

Many of the gathered news stories under both thematic areas, were mainly basic reports and did not contain any level of investigative reporting. Investigative reporting can lead to the revealing of important information and can have significant social impact. It includes in-depth research, uncovering new information that has not been previously reported to bring new insights into an issue, using advance techniques such as computer-assisted reporting, and detailed fact-checking that is well-supported by evidence before publication.

Based on the stories examined, they were mainly based on police reports, press releases and public statements from authorities. Overall, there was a lack of investigative reporting.

The exceptions were mostly from Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) where there were attempts to explore the TIP story perspectives as human interest to show the emotional and social aspects of the scenarios covered. Human interest stories focus on the personal and emotional aspects of the human experience, distinguishing them from more straightforward news reporting. These stories aim to connect with the audience on a personal level, often evoking empathy, sympathy, or motivation. There was increased sensitivity relating to the Venezuelan migrant stories.

Newsrooms are larger in Trinidad and Tobago with a minimum of five reporters as compared to the other countries in this report who have four or less reporters. The number of journalists in a newsroom significantly influences several aspects of news production including the depth and breadth of coverage; the quality of journalism; the response to breaking news; and the ability to undertake investigative and human-interest stories which require more time and production resources. Larger newsrooms are also better able to have specialization.

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<sup>8</sup> A dipstick study is a 'one-time' exercise undertaken to answer a specific question. The opposite to a dipstick study is a tracking study where data is being collected on a routine basis such as daily, weekly, monthly or annually.



These newsrooms also have slightly better resources than the smaller newsrooms. These resources include recording and editing equipment and software. A news story requires dedicated staff and time so with more journalists in a newsroom there can be wider coverage as opposed to a smaller newsroom where stories must be prioritized. For example, a report from parliament on the adoption of legislation would take precedence over a story about a victim of human trafficking. This was a sentiment expressed by a media manager.

### Lack of Training

Of the twenty-one journalists interviewed, none of them received any formal guidance or specialized training on how to report on the themes. There was a lack of investigative reporting techniques and knowledge to uncover the significant facts to create powerful narratives. Based on the focus groups, feedback indicated that some newsrooms also have no editorial policy or guideline for reporting on TIP. Based on interviews with journalists, there is no sensitivity training towards the issues of TIP or youth involvement in crime and violence. This lack of understanding and knowledge stymies the potential for reporting on various perspectives which can have a positive impact on the public's awareness of TIP. More impactful stories which better represent the facts can also influence policymakers and by extension more effective policy changes can be implemented.

### Resource Restrictions

Based on media viability research<sup>9</sup> In addition to interviews done for this report, most of the countries have small newsrooms that are floundering under the economic pressure of a post-pandemic environment. Their ability to dedicate the time to telling the stories from more sensitive angles or to assign specific journalists to do so, is not achievable. This is why stories are regurgitations of press releases. Free and independent media are facing intense viability challenges. Six senior level media executives were interviewed and shared a similar opinion that where there is state-owned media, the trend is that reporting predominantly focuses on the presentation of government's perspectives without questioning related policies, procedures or practices. State-owned media exists in all countries researched for this report.

### Lack of Data

Data on the media and statistics on crime are not easily available or accessible in any of the countries. There is no open-source data. Where data is available from social services, or government agencies, getting approval to release this information can take months. The research team had that experience when compiling information for this report. This can be very off-putting for journalists as expressed by them while compiling this report and the delay in time means that the story elements may change and become outdated and redundant as some stories are time sensitive.

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9 [UNESCO Media Viability Indicators Research Study, 2022](#) by Media Institute of the Caribbean

### Lack of Policy to Obtain Information

There is a lack of Freedom of Information and Access to Information legislation and where this does exist, there seems to be a lack of proper procedure with how responses are dealt with and many FOI /ATI requests are delayed. This complicates the process of getting information. It also requires additional resources of time, personnel and finances, as applying for information becomes entangled in a bureaucratic web.

COUNTRY	FOI / ATI LEGISLATION
Antigua and Barbuda	Yes
Barbados	No
Grenada	No
Saint Lucia	No
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines	Yes
Trinidad & Tobago	Yes

**Table 4 – Countries in this report that have Freedom of Information Legislation**

### Lack of Collaboration with CSOs and NGOs

Based on the interviews conducted for this report, These entities were not seen as a provider of information by the media as the media is unaware of their existence and of the many initiatives they have implemented. If such entities were mentioned at all, it was only done based on an initiative involving government or diplomatic support. Representatives of the civil society organizations (CSO’s) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who were interviewed, expressed the sentiment that there are projects and programs which hunger for the support of the government and private sector, and many do not gain the media’s attention.

### Willingness to Learn

Interviews with journalists indicated that they are open to understanding how they can develop their skill to produce better stories and this came from some of them who admitted that these areas do have potential for fresh perspectives but they have not focused their time and effort as such is not mandated by their editors. Editors interviewed for this study said they would welcome training on the topic as they saw that it would be beneficial to journalists.

### Networking

There is potential to develop a group or community which allows for feedback and interaction on these issues. Such a group would involve all stakeholders and could facilitate cross-border collaboration. The development of a database of contacts who are references can also allow for expedited input into the stories and is worth considering.





A comprehensive understanding of the media environment allows for a more relevant analysis of the research as it will explain how media is consumed and what the engagement levels are across media platforms, In turn, there would be a better understanding of which stories need to be shared where and what the best structure might be . This ecosystem overview employed two assessment models:

1. Internews Information Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) Model
2. Media and Information Mapping Media for Democracy Assessment Tool

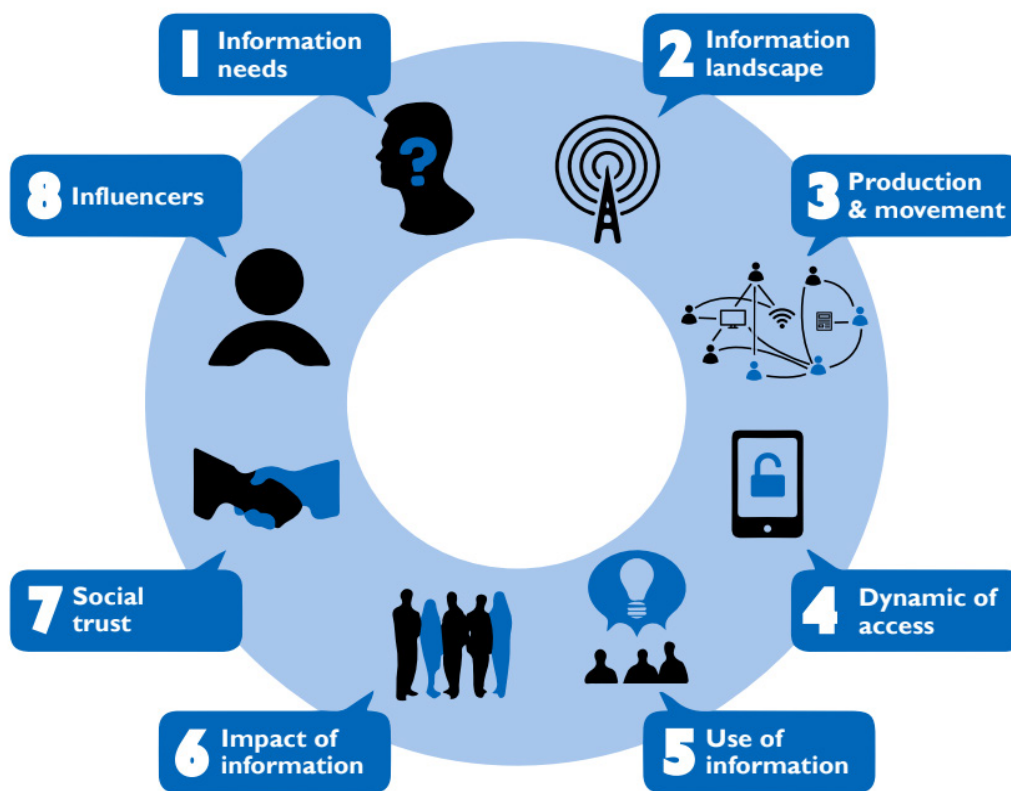
### Understanding the Information Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) Model

A comprehensive understanding of the media and information ecosystem allows us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the coverage of the issues of the portrayal of youth involvement in crime as well as the treatment of stories on Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and the involvement of youth in crime and violence by the media. This is important because how the stories are distributed via various platforms means that the form and structure of the stories would have to be different for them to have impact and gain the attention of audiences.

*According to Internews: The goal of an Information Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) is to gain a deeper understanding of how people find, share, value, and trust information in their own local contexts, whether it comes from the media or not. IEAs map both sides of the relationship between information supply and demand in an information ecosystem through a multi-phase approach. IEAs can be leveraged to design adaptive programming that is consistently informed by community input and feedback throughout the project life cycle. As a central feature of project design, the IEA enables the establishment of dynamic community information feedback loops between beneficiaries, infomediaries and service providers. These feedback loops in turn provide qualitative, evolving insights into the drivers of stigma, discrimination, and ingrained social norms, track and evaluate social and cultural factors that act as barriers to accessing and delivering quality services and provide real-time monitoring and evaluation of community engagement.*

The most practical and relevant Information Ecosystem Assessment Model has been developed by Internews who identifies eight (8) critical dimensions in their methodology:

1. *Information needs – are the information needs of all groups being served?*
2. *Information landscape – what infrastructures are in place to support information production and flow?*
3. *Production and movement of information – who generates information and how does it move?*
4. *Dynamic of access – what are the power structures in the environment and how can they affect how the information flows?*
5. *Use of information – what do people do with the information they receive?*
6. *Impact of information – what impact does this information have on the community?*
7. *Social trust – whose information do individuals trust?*
8. *Influencers in the community – which voices are loudest or most influential?*



*Information Ecosystem Graphic from Internews*

Based on feedback from those interviewed, it was evident that the Media Sector in all countries examined for this study, are heavily influenced by politics. All countries also have at least one state / government entity that utilises its command of the media outlet to ensure its messaging is delivered. The researchers stated that there is very little or no presence of opposition parties or entities on state media. There are also no laws with regards to equality of airtime for political parties. Where such rules exist, it is imposed by private media houses and forms part of their operational policy.

Trinidad and Tobago is the only country where interviewees stated that the presence of race impacted politics. The main political parties are perceived to be Afro-Trinbagonian (Afro descent of Trinidad and Tobago) and Indo-Trinidadian (Indo descent of Trinidad).

The number of traditional media outlets (radio, television and newspapers) have been somewhat consistent over the past two decades. However, there has been an explosion in the number of online information sources. There are digital news outlets which have popped up and have become more accessible as internet penetration in the region has increased.

COUNTRY	PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE ONLINE
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Antigua and Barbuda	95.7%
Barbados	85.8%
Grenada	77.8%
Saint Lucia	78.1%
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	84.9%
Trinidad & Tobago	79%

**Table 5 - Percentage of People Online in Each Country. Source: Statista, Feb 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

	ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	BARBADOS	GRENADA	SAINT LUCIA	ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
<b>Area</b>	440km <sup>2</sup>	430km <sup>2</sup>	348.5km <sup>2</sup>	617km <sup>2</sup>	389km <sup>2</sup>	5,128km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Population</b>	93,219	287,371	112,253	182,790	110,947	1,367,558
<b>GDP per capita</b>	\$15,781	\$13,826	\$9,051	\$8,804	\$7,297	\$14,876
<b>Approximate Number of Media Workers</b>	35	80	65	30	40	250
<b>Media Houses</b>						
<b>Print</b>	1	2	3	2	2	3
<b>Television</b>	2	2	5	0	1	5
<b>Radio</b>	2	20	21	10	2	36
<b>Online</b>	2	7	3	5	3	3
<b>Is there State-owned media (Yes/No)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Social Media Data:</b>						
<b>Internet Users</b>	75.3K	235.4K	66.9K	140.4K	88.1K	1.210K
<b>Facebook Users</b>	54.6K	144K	62.9K	90.1K	62.2K	754.7K
<b>Instagram Users</b>	37.1K	171.6K	45.8K	62.1K	47.2K	631K

**Table 6 - Snapshot of Media Landscape for the countries covered in this report<sup>10</sup>**

COUNTRY	MEDIA ASSOCIATION
Antigua and Barbuda	None exists
Barbados	BARJAM - The Barbados Association of Journalists and Media Workers
Grenada	MWAG - Media Workers Association of Grenada
Saint Lucia	MASL - Media Association of Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	None exists
Trinidad & Tobago	MATT - Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago (Media Workers)/ TTPBA - Trinidad and Tobago Publishers and Broadcasters Association (Media Managers and Owners)

**Table 7 - List of Media Associations in each country reviewed in this report**

There is one umbrella organization which spans the region: Association of Caribbean Media Workers.

<sup>10</sup> Sources of Data include The State of Caribbean Media Report 2022 by the Association of Caribbean Media Workers; Data Portal Digital Data 2023 Insights

The Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM) is a network of journalists, media workers and media associations spanning the Caribbean Basin. It was established in Barbados in 2001. Its membership includes media professionals and their representative associations from countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the French and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.

The Media Institute of the Caribbean The Media Institute of the Caribbean is a non-profit organisation, resource and training facility for the Caribbean that provides media resources and training for journalists, communicators and leaders, to contribute to the regional democratic process by supporting an innovative and independent Media Industry; evaluates current Caribbean policies, strategies and initiatives, and suggests alternatives to regional media challenges, while working within the Caribbean region with journalists; adapts to the evolving industry to strengthen investigative techniques and leadership skills of its members; facilitates media incubators, innovators and entrepreneurs; and Produces and promotes stories on the region for global audiences.

Caribbean Broadcast Union (CBU) is a not-for-profit association of public service and commercial broadcasters in the Caribbean, the majority of whose members are mainly state media entities. It facilitates discussion and analysis that assist in policy formulation on major integration issues.

## Media Development Funding

These countries have not received extensive or sustainable support for media development as in the case of Jamaica for CARIMAC at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Kingston, Jamaica (which serves the Caribbean region) and Northern Caribbean University (NCU) in Manchester, Jamaica. This may also be because the size of the media fraternities is very small and there is a lack of physical infrastructure. The entity in the region which has been doing most of the journalistic training with active journalists and has about 300 journalists trained in intensive short courses or boot camps, is the Media Institute of the Caribbean (MIC). Most of MIC's training has been done virtually due to restrictive budgets.

Journalists typically do not specialise as newsrooms are small and resources are very restricted. Based on several interviews and interaction by the Media Institute of the Caribbean between 2012 and 2023, the feedback of over two hundred journalists indicates that there is self-censorship in the region. There is a lack of investigative reporting and follow up because of these two issues in particular which affect output.

Newsrooms are hard-pressed to implement safety for journalists and do not have the revenue to allow for in-depth research and fact finding necessary for investigative reporting. There is only one investigative reporting media outfit, Caribbean Investigative Journalism Network<sup>11</sup> ([www.cijn.org](http://www.cijn.org)). The countries in this study have news outlets which have carried stories from this source which allows for the increased audience and better exposure of the stories.

## Misinformation and Disinformation

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<sup>11</sup> The Caribbean Investigative Journalism Network ([www.cijn.org](http://www.cijn.org)) is a non-profit entity and the Caribbean region's only independent investigative journalism media platform.

In 2022, the Public Media Alliance (PMA) supported by UNESCO, commissioned a study as a situation report done by the Media Institute of the Caribbean (MIC) and the Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM) titled, “Media literacy, disinformation & misinformation in the Caribbean”. The following was noted:

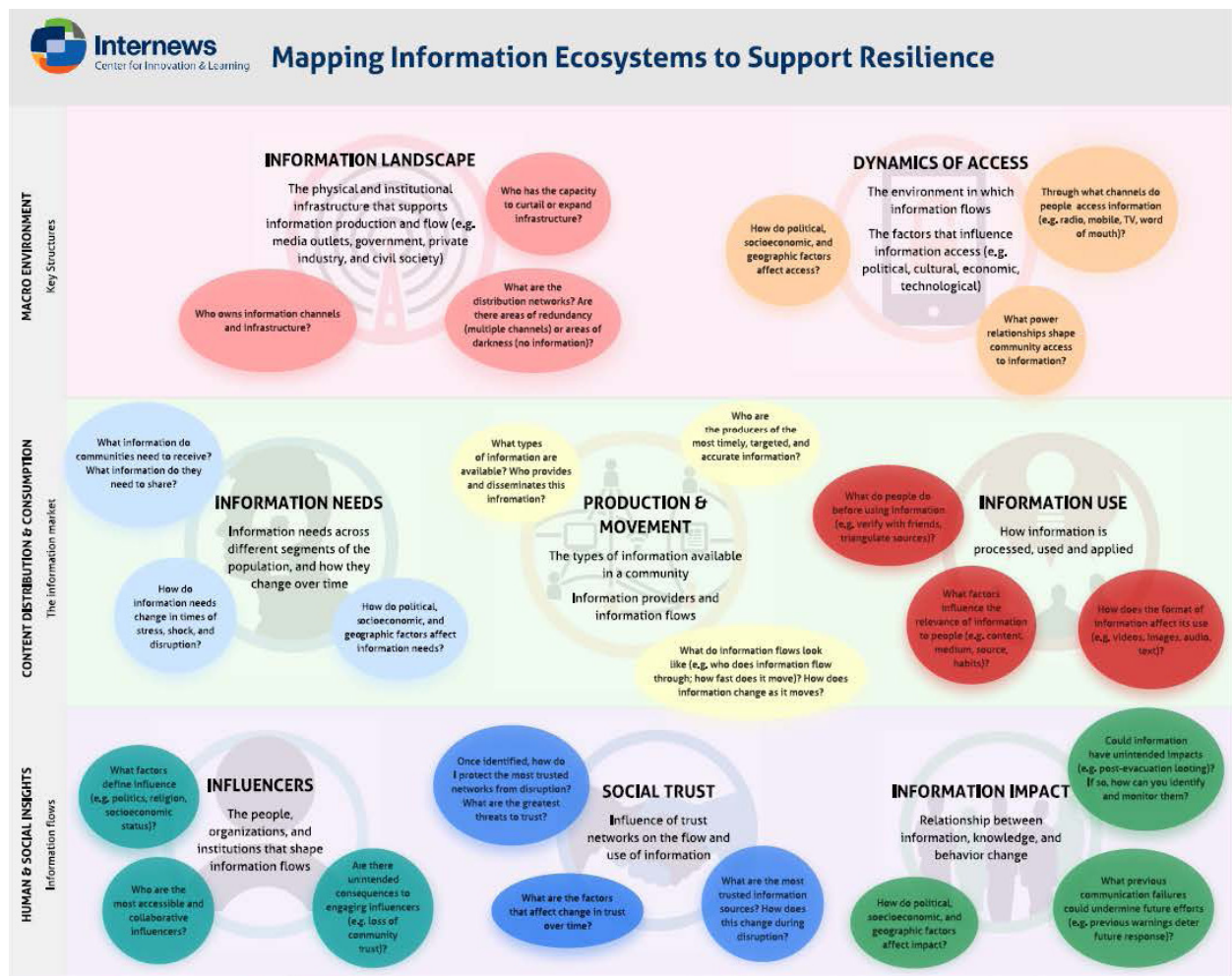
*“The Caribbean has a vibrant and diverse media landscape, with rapidly developing digital services. However, mis- and disinformation have increased across the region, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, and crises, posing a threat to the regional media environment and to the lives and wellbeing of its citizens. Improved media and information literacy is a necessary and a pivotal way of tackling disinformation in society, along with trust in verified independent news and citizen engagement.*”

*Meanwhile, the potential for collaboration in the Caribbean media landscape remains relatively untapped. One solution is to create a strong Caribbean-wide network of affordable and accessible sources of verified news. The project explored the viability of cross-border collaboration for fact-checking initiatives that support media literacy and fight disinformation while improving the capacity of Caribbean media workers to promote media literacy and thwart disinformation. The project’s final objective was to contribute towards improved media and information literacy in the Caribbean by laying the foundation for more careful reporting, fact-checking, transparency regarding media ownership, and increased regional collaboration.”*

**Watching the watchdogs:** *Several researchers noted that there are low barriers to entry into the media landscape. While, understandably, social media was a breeding ground for “citizen journalists” to share information with little to no qualifications, it was also pointed out that established media houses (print, television, radio, and online sites) similarly struggled with recruiting qualified media workers. In Grenada, for example, researcher Linda Straker explained that it is not uncommon for those entering media careers locally to do so immediately following graduation from secondary school. Luckily, she added, an Associate Degree in Media Studies is offered by a local community college and several newsroom staff at print media outlets have obtained this certification. But it becomes more difficult to find broadcasters or announcers who have pursued the associate degree level certification and, as a result, many announcers or DJs are untrained before entering their professions. Similarly in St Vincent & the Grenadines, researcher Colvin Harry found that on-air radio hosts serve as conduits for disinformation. Hence, with low barriers to entry, regulating formal media organisations was put forward by several researchers as a way to curb the impact of irresponsible journalism, lower disinformation and promote media literacy, and build trust in news. In their recommendations, researchers called for legislative changes, such as a review of the Newspapers Act to include online publications in Grenada. Recommended regulation was not limited to legislative changes. Some researchers also recommended improved regulation through media associations. For instance, Barbados researcher recommended the creation of a professional association that accredits journalists and disciplines “malpractice” by media workers. Meanwhile, in Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines where there are no media workers’ associations there were calls for the establishment of such bodies.”*

## Mapping the Information Ecosystem – the Internews Approach

This is perhaps the most robust mapping tool and it has been used in the Caribbean region in 2022 to 2023 in the countries of Dominica, Barbados and Jamaica. MIC recommends this model be used do in-depth mapping studies. For the purpose of this report, we did a 'lite' version of the mapping based on the scope of work.



## Human and Social Insights

- **Influencers**

These are the people, organizations and institutions that shape information flows.

- Politicians
- Radio & Television Talk Show Hosts, contributors to newspaper editorial
- Activists
- Online social commentators

- **Social Trust**

Influence of trusted networks on the flow and use of information

- Churches and other places of worship
- Schools
- NGOs

- **Information Impact**

Relationship between information, knowledge and behaviour change

- Traditional media
- Social Media (TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat)

## Content Distribution and Consumption

- Information Needs

- Information needs have changed and may continue to do so as technological advances and new communication applications are introduced.
- The standard and level of acceptability is also changing where the new information ecosystem has multiple voices and modes of expression. Government messaging is not as impactful as it was fifty years ago as it was the dominant provider of information on matters of public interest. Now, bloggers, social media, WhatsApp etc., has filtered in and ease of accessibility to information plays a vital role.

- Production and Movement

- The types of information available varies. Key sources of information based on the survey shows that the information ecosystems are all complex in that there is exposure and engagement with both legacy and new media. Yet the most trusted source of information is still legacy media. This proposes a dichotomy between the level of positive influence and the types of media to which the public is exposed.

- Information Use

- How is information processed, used and applied. There is a tendency to forward information without fact checking. The use of videos or images attracts more attention which can be dangerous as these seem authentic but can be manipulated.
- Among older and more mature audiences there is still trust in newspapers, radio and television news. Whereas younger audiences depend on TikTok, Instagram, Facebook. The common media source for all age groups is WhatsApp.

## Macro Environment

- Information Landscape: The physical and institutional infrastructure that supports information production and flow.
  - All countries have state media. There is no public broadcasting model. State media has the advantage of resources as these are subsidized and ministries and agencies have a guaranteed outlet for their output.
  - Private media are plagued with media viability issues which includes decreased revenue streams and ever increasing competition from big tech companies like Google and Metta. In addition, there is a degree of self-censorship where there may be safety concerns and the threat of crippling legal action. In an economically challenging era, free and independent media is under the threat of downsizing or redesigning their business model where they may lose their independent voice.
  
- Dynamics of Access: The factors that influence access.
  - Technological
    - Internet Penetration is at over 75% of populations in this study.
    - All countries have cable television and access to streaming devices such as Netflix, Amazon and Apple TV. Android boxes are also available.
  
  - Political
    - With state media present in all countries, government messaging is easily transmissible.
    - Lack of legislation and incentives to help ensure the viability of traditional media.
  
  - Economic
    - As many as 75% and above of the population use their phones to access streaming and data is affordable. This is why most radio and television stations are also online.
    - Broadcast networks and newspaper operations are cash intensive and revenue sources are dwindling.

## Dipstick Survey

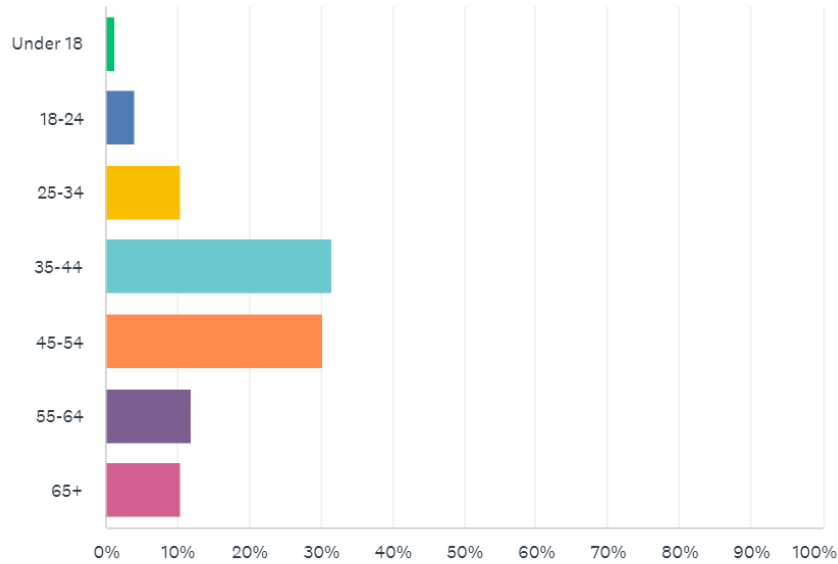
Due to a lack of data on media consumption habits, the Media Institute of the Caribbean (MIC) did a mobile random dipstick survey asking a few simple questions to gain some insight regarding which forms of media are most popular. With a randomly selected sample, researchers can compare media usage patterns across different demographic groups. This helps to identify trends, patterns, and differences in media consumption behaviors, which can inform media analysis and decision-making processes.

This information can be used as a guide to understand media consumption and the format of stories to reach audiences depending on their demographics.

We did this via a survey monkey link for a 2-minute survey that could be done online or on mobile phones. The link was shared via the research team, on MIC's social media and on UNDP's social media. There were 169 respondents across the six countries in this study. The results are as follows:

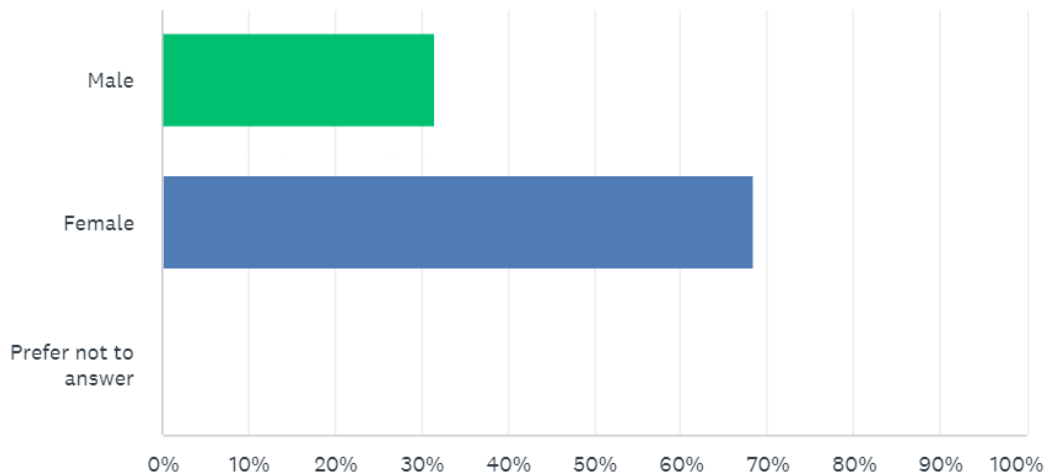


### Question 1: How old are you?



The above chart indicates that the largest groups of respondents are ages 25 to 54.

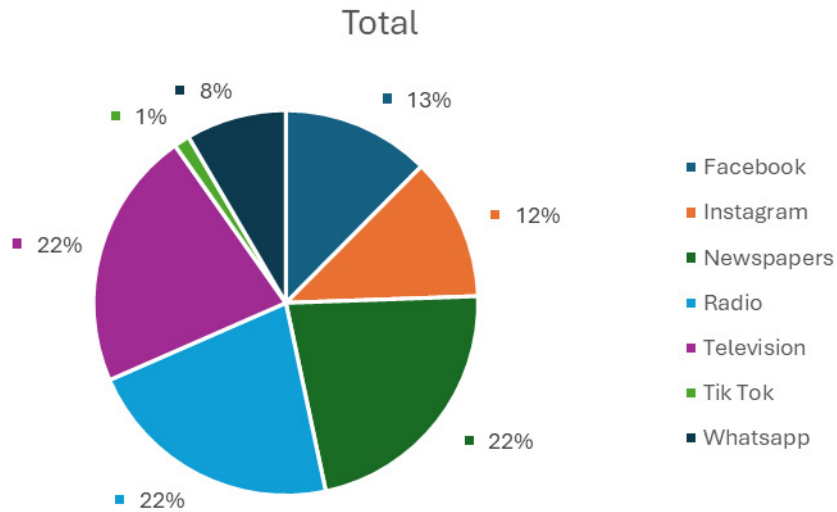
### Question 2: What is your gender?



The above chart indicates that the largest groups of respondents are ages 25 to 54.

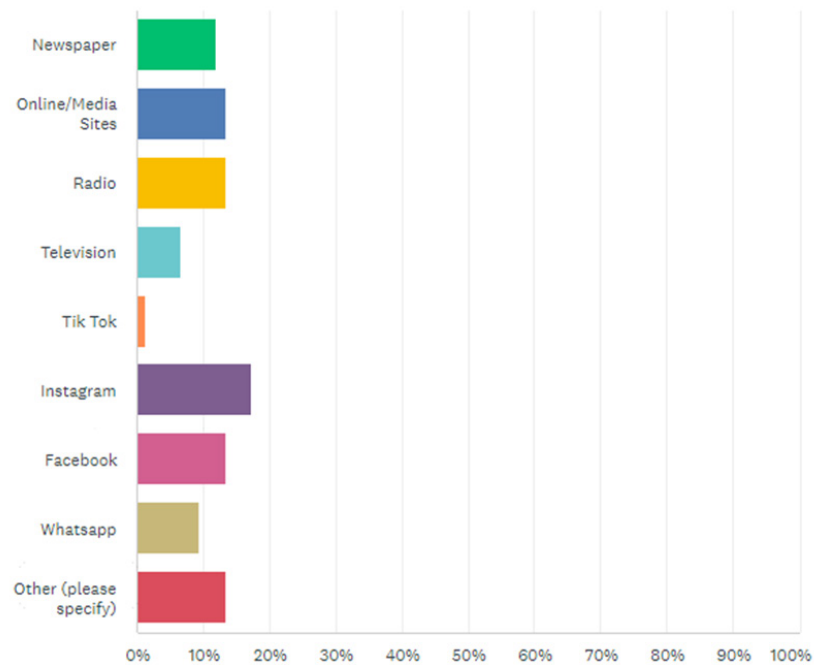
To better understand the most popular forms of media, the respondents were asked to rank their preferences as their sources of information. The results below are categorised by age to allow for greater insight into how messaging or media coverage can be done to ensure greater reach.

### Question 3: Which source do you rely on the most for information?



Radio, Television and Tik Tok tied with the greatest number of respondents.

**Question 4: Where do you get most of your information?<sup>12</sup>**



Instagram, Facebook and Radio have the greatest number of responses.

Instagram scored the highest here, whereas Radio and Online Media scored second highest closely followed

<sup>12</sup> There was only one respondent in the Under 18 age group whose ranking was as follows: 1. Tik Tok 2. Instagram 3. WhatsApp

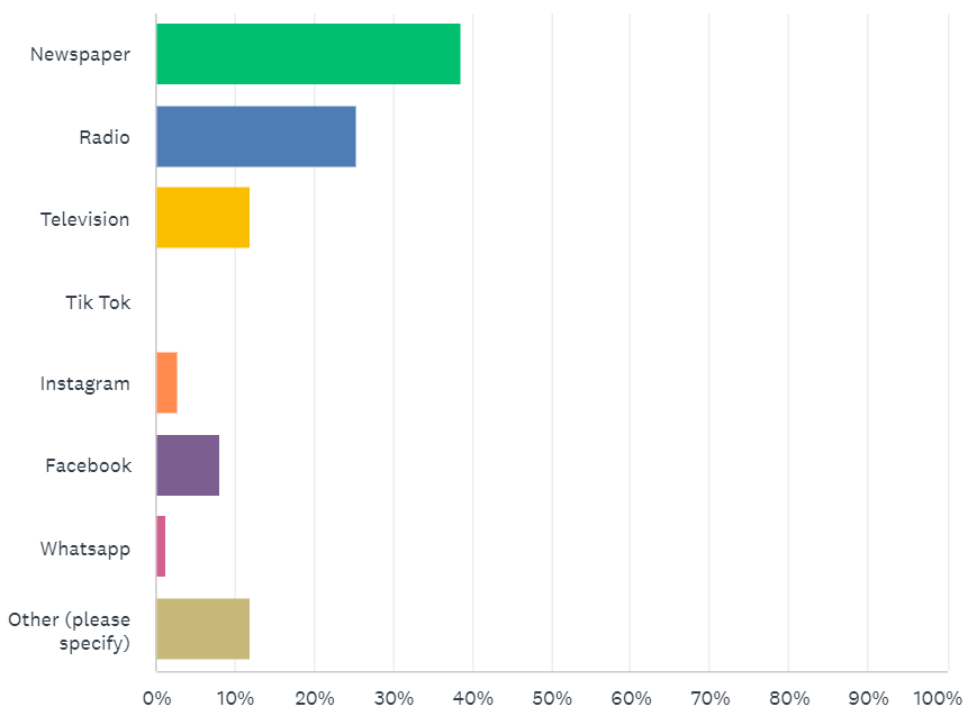
by Newspaper. This shows that while traditional media is still very strong, social media sites are seen as a source of information as opposed to entertainment only.

### Question 6: Which media do you trust the most?

It is interesting to note that credible sources of information are still legacy media and ranked this way based on this dip stick random sample:

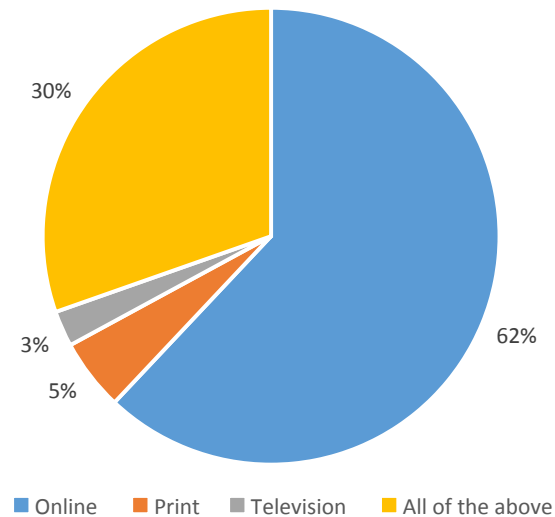
1. Newspaper (which may be online or hard copy)
2. Radio
3. Television

Traditional media is still considered the most credible sources of information and respected by the public for truth and accuracy.



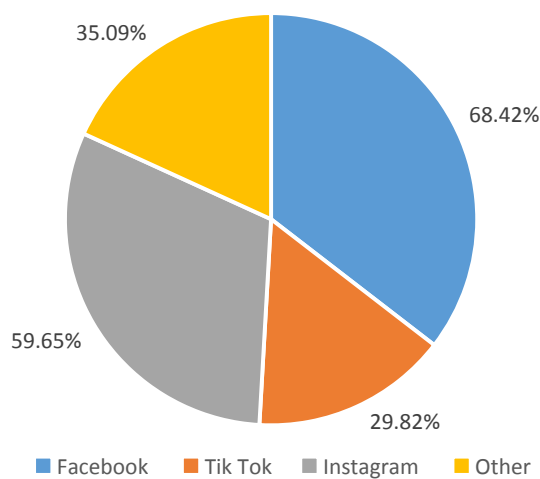
### Question 7: Which forms of media do you think carry fake news/false information?

Based on the results indicated below, the respondents recognise the leading source of misinformation and disinformation as online. However, as evidenced by the number of users of Facebook and Instagram, what we are unclear of is whether they can decipher what is false or misleading content.



### Question 8: Which of these social media platforms do you use to stay informed?

Facebook ranked the highest here. All the media houses which were included in the analysis have Facebook pages. All the media houses in this research also have Facebook pages. It is unclear which Facebook pages are used to stay informed.



# 5

## YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME



**POLICE LINE - DO NOT CROSS**



## 5.1 Objective and Scope

The objective of this research is to identify the key issues in media reporting on youth involvement in crime and violence – as both perpetrators and victims - for the period July 2021-June 2023 in Barbados, Grenada and St. Vincent & The Grenadines. Practical, implementable recommendations will be made for media houses to improve their coverage.

The following areas will be examined:

- Environmental factors which affect reporting
- Representativeness of reportage vs national crime statistics
- Are stories fair and balanced?
- Is there appropriate regard for how stories are reported being mindful of human rights?
- Public impact

### Limitations:

1. Limited data as there is a lack of media monitoring in two of the countries – Grenada and St. Vincent & The Grenadines. Physical searches of records at media entities had to be done for these two countries and none of the media houses kept records.
2. The data gathered did not and could not extensively capture the topic as broadcast on radio news or on radio talk shows. Because of its ubiquitous nature, currency, ease of access and oral traditions, radio is one of the most influential forms of media across the Caribbean. More examples of discussion and news reports about youth crime and violence in this medium could have produced valuable additional information.<sup>13</sup>
3. National crime and violence statistics are either not readily available or there is apparent inefficiency or reluctance to release the data depending on the country being studied.
4. Comparisons will be made between crime statistics of charge and arrest against media stories to assess alignment. However, the statistics concerning crime and arrest are not necessarily a true reflection of the actual level of incidents and proportionality of incidents of crime. Based on interviews with members of the protection services, they felt there may be underreporting.

## 5.2 Analysis

### Legislative Environment

Youth crime, and in particular, violent youth crime is becoming a growing concern in the Caribbean and indeed worldwide as any increase in youth crime is somewhat of a predictor of the level of future crime as the demographic ages and is replaced. When speaking of youth crime, it is important to define the age range

<sup>13</sup> [Radio remains one of the most trusted medium of communication, UNESCO February 2022](#)

for “youth”. Internationally, there is no universally agreed international definition for “youth”. As signatories to agreements with the United Nations, The Commonwealth and USAID the definition of the age of youth are inherently conflicted and so Barbados, Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines have their own definitions which direct legislation.

The United Nations (UN) define youth as persons 15-24 years old. Member states of the UN including Commonwealth members have their own independent definitions. Most Caribbean nations are members of the Commonwealth and have strong historical ties which impact regulations and culture. “Youth” has been defined as 15-29 years old which is reinforced under the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) 2006-2015.

The Caribbean countries in this study essentially define youth in a manner which encompasses the UN age range of 15-24 and the Commonwealth age range of 15-29. In Barbados (Barbados Youth Policy 2011) and Grenada persons aged 15-29 are considered youth while in St. Vincent and the Grenadines youth is 16-35. In all countries persons become legally adult at 18 and only Barbados maintains the death penalty which is applicable to adults. The age of criminal responsibility is at age 12 in Grenada and St. Vincent unlike Barbados where the age is 11. The age differences in what is considered a juvenile is very different which in Barbados is 12-15, in Grenada under 18 and in St. Vincent 12-13. The discrepancies between Barbados and its neighbours should be eliminated once the Child Justice Bill 2023 replaces existing legislation after public consultation and feedback. This bill is still before the House and it is unsure when it will be passed. Media houses typically consider youth to be under 30 years old and minors under 18.

There is a lack of consistency in the definition of youth between NGOs and government in two of the countries. For instance, The Ministry of Youth in Grenada recognizes youth as being 18-35 and notwithstanding the Youth Policy, Barbadian NGOs and government typically use 11-30 and the term “juvenile” is only used in law enforcement reports. In contrast St. Vincent & the Grenadines has a high level of consistency.

With so many varying definitions of youth, when someone is exposed to a media story their concept of what youth is can be different and this can only be safeguarded by stating the ages of the subject(s) of the stories. This begs the question, what are the norms and regulations for covering youth crimes?

Media in Barbados are guided by the Juvenile Offenders Act Cap 138, Part 11 3 (6)(7):

*(6) no person shall publish the name, address, school, photograph, or anything likely to lead to the identification of the child or young person before the juvenile court, save with the court's permission or in so far as required by this act*

*(7) Any person who acts in contravention of subscription (6) shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$96.*

The Prosecution Code for Conduct is the standard guide for the prosecution department of the Royal Grenada Police Force. There are no official broadcast laws or regulations which provide guidance, so the code is used as a guide by media houses. The code says the name or identity particulars of a protected witness, including a complainant in a sexual offence, a blackmail victim, or a juvenile defendant, has to be authorized.



Traditional media in St. Vincent rarely publish details of children as part of their self-regulation in the absence of any legislation. Standard media ethics dictate that the identity of persons less than 18 are not to be identified in any way in reportage. Care is to be taken to not publish the child’s name, parent or relatives’ names, address, photos video or audio which can allow the public to decipher who they are or where they are from. These professional media principles are substantially adhered to in Barbados, Grenada, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

Libel and defamation laws exist in Barbados, Grenada, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Small media houses cannot afford to fight lawsuits and depending on the level of awards, they can be driven out of business. Additionally, they cannot pay for security for journalists (and relocation) if necessary. This results in a degree of self-censorship where stories with potential libel/defamation or security issues may be avoided.

While this is not legislation in its purest sense it is indicative of the direction of official policy. A media source in Grenada revealed that public servants (including cleaners) have been made to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) to prevent leaks. This was discovered while trying to source information and clarification for stories.

**Media Environment:**

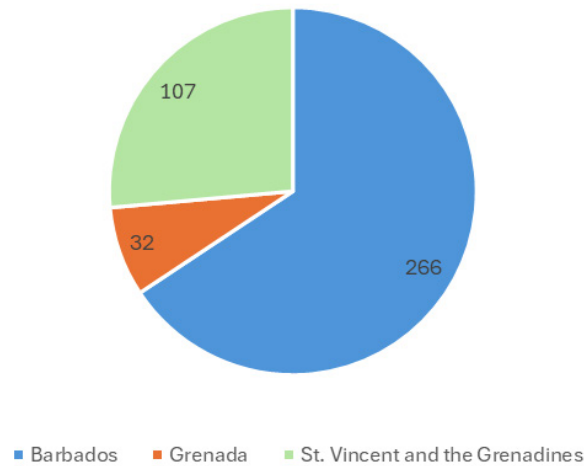
These are small island states in the Eastern Caribbean with a shared colonial and Commonwealth history and a combined population of just over half a million people. Between the countries there are approximately 177 media workers, 43 radio stations (7 x state owned, 3 with state investment), 9 television stations (2 x state owned, 2 with state investment), 6 newspapers and 13 online/digital news outlets. Interestingly, Grenada has the proportionately largest media industry despite having less than half the population of Barbados and a lower GDP. Please see Table 1 below.

	BARBADOS	GRENADA	ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
<b>Area</b>	430km <sup>2</sup>	348.5km <sup>2</sup>	389km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Population</b>	287,371	112,253	110,947
<b>GDP per capita</b>	\$13,826	\$9,051	\$7,297
<b>Approximate Number of Media Workers</b>	80	65	40
<b>Media Houses</b>			
<b>Print</b>	2	3	2
<b>Television</b>	2	5	1
<b>Radio</b>	20	21	2
<b>Online</b>	7	3	3
<b>Is there State-owned media (Yes/No)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Social Media Data:</b>			
<b>Internet Users</b>	235.4K	66.9K	88.1K
<b>Facebook Users</b>	144K	62.9K	62.2K
<b>Instagram Users</b>	171.6K	45.8K	47.2K

**Table 8 - Snapshot of country and media demographics.**



Number of Stories on Youth In Crime for Each Country Analysed  
June 2021 to June 2023



These small island states have small, relatively modest economies as evidenced by their low GDP per capita - US\$13,826 for Barbados, US\$9,051 for Grenada and US\$7,297 for St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Accordingly, media houses have modest resources when compared to more developed countries and newsrooms struggle to fill the required minutes and column inches for content. As such, it is understandable that with an emphasis on generating the required amount of content, the quality of content may suffer.

The Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM) is a network of journalists, media workers and media associations spanning the Caribbean Basin. It was established in Barbados in 2001. Its membership includes media professionals and their representative associations from countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the French and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. ACM has organized training programmes on a wide variety of subjects across the Caribbean and is a strong regional advocate of freedom of expression and press freedom. ACM has also published biennial State of the Caribbean Media Reports and Our Children, Our Media – Reporting Guidelines on the Coverage of Children amongst others.

Barbados and Grenada have media/press associations that advocate for media rights, the Barbados Association of Journalists and Media Workers and the Media Workers Association of Grenada. Both are members of ACM. St. Vincent & the Grenadines does not have media or press associations, but the ACM has a designated point person who acts on their behalf and liaises with local journalists as is needed.

### Impediments to Reporting

All countries reviewed exhibit impediments to reporting and these impediments occur inside media houses as well as externally.

Not surprisingly, media in all 3 countries note that their capacity and resources are stretched thin. With 177 media workers spread across 71 media outlets between all countries (table 4.) that gives an average of 2.49



journalists per media house to cover all stories. They simply do not have the manpower to cover events and stories in a more comprehensive manner. This mainly comes down to finance and economics. The local economies are small and media houses cannot generate sufficient revenue to better equip and staff newsrooms. Added to this, the increased competition from big tech like Facebook, Instagram, X and Tic Toc in the social media space leaves media houses struggling to survive much less remain viable.

Another issue is that newsrooms are dominated by females and typically media houses prefer to leave crime reporting to males for safety and security reasons as typically women are more susceptible to harm. This is true for on location reporting and firsthand investigative journalism which can come with individual security risk of reprisal and attack. As the need for crime reporting and related stories increases the existing capacity becomes even more stretched. This situation is exacerbated as there are no reported security measures or protocols in place for journalists covering crime and the trust in security forces is lukewarm and the best rating is fair in Barbados according to the Public Opinion Survey on Crime and Related National Issues by the Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit (2021). Additionally, journalists are responsible for their own safety at crime scenes and after stories are published. This does not engender an enabling environment for journalists.

Some newsrooms seem to reflect the belief that bad news sells, and they need to maintain their audience to remain in business<sup>14</sup>. While the heads of newsrooms and journalists will usually do their best to present fair and balanced stories, there can be some skew in which stories are published and lead. Other factors also come into play. Tourism is the primary source of income in Barbados, if there is back-to-back reporting of crime it could appear that the island is unsafe according to a journalist source, which may impact how stories about crime are presented to the public. Crime stories are placed in sections of papers and newscasts, surrounded by other stories such as business, government assignments etc. which could serve to “blunt” the impact and observed frequency of stories.

A major external societal factor affecting all 3 countries is the small size of population, where people often do not want to be quoted or go on record. This is not unusual for smaller societies but in some Caribbean countries including Barbados there is an additional issue – the “informer” culture. [Under “informer” culture](#),<sup>15</sup> whistleblowers are seen as pariahs and will be treated as such if they are discovered. Sometimes whistleblowers can face open hostility and violence for speaking up over everyday matters, much less crime and violence.

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14 The Medium Blog, “Why We Seem to Prefer Bad News Over Good News” by Ray Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023.

15 St. Vincent Times, 17th February 2024



St. Vincent Times, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Fortunately, there are different forms of access for citizens to report crime, with hotlines in Barbados (Crime Stoppers) and Grenada, that offer some level of anonymity. In October 2023, Enville Williams, Commissioner of Police (CoP) in St. Vincent & the Grenadines, promised to reinstitute a hotline for citizens to report crime amidst concerns of increasing crime.

Media houses get stories about crime from court and police reports when they can. But they also depend on tips, first-hand and eyewitness accounts for crime stories. This creates more potential security and safety exposure for both the journalist and sources alike. In practice, the unwillingness of eyewitnesses to come forward can be a limitation particularly where the fear of reprisal is higher, and crimes seem to be getting more violent.

Getting statistical data and officials to speak on record in Grenada can be problematic and the media does not benefit from regular, timely releases and briefings. In Grenada, briefings and releases about youth crime are rare and again, often not timely. Prior to 2018 media used to get a daily "Police Blotter" report on crime which was invaluable for news stories and reports as the information was always current. Reports are that the cessation of the blotter was coincident with a regime change.

In contrast, things have improved over the last 5 years in St. Vincent & the Grenadines particularly in the last 18 months during the period of March 2022 to June 2023. The Royal St Vincent and The Grenadines Police force now convene regular press conferences and weekly press releases on criminal activity. Barbados too demonstrates a structured approach inviting media houses press briefings and do daily releases from the Government Information Service and stories on youth crime are released once the "youth" is not a juvenile or child. However, there is no Access to Information Act/Freedom of information Act, so it isn't easy to access data promptly as there is no obligation for such information to be released.



Journalists in all 3 countries report that security forces severely restrict information for stories involving minors which in turn limits the stories that come to public attention in traditional media. In Grenada this seems to be more extreme where there is apparently in essence an embargo on stories with juveniles as there is a day designated for juvenile matters in each magistrate court and reporters are not allowed to witness proceedings. This begs the question...in an effort to protect the identities of children, are the authorities preventing stories from being published that should be, based on the nature and severity of the incident? This could be viewed as a form of censorship. Even though minors have a right to identity protection, the public has a right to be aware of significant events and incidents. Media has a responsibility to publish such stories accordingly while at the same time protecting the identity of minors.

### How representative is the coverage of youth crime?

Following a comprehensive review of all the stories collected for analysis, a series of keywords were developed as a criteria for which most of the media reports could be categorized and compared. Table 9 below illustrates the data.

TYPE OF YOUTH CRIME	BARBADOS	GRENADA	ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES	TOTALS
Gang	10	1	0	11
Gun	194	7	36	237
Firearm	42	4	0	46
Ammunition	21	4	14	39
Knife	1	1	4	6
Cutlass/Chopping	0	1	3	4
Assault	18	1	9	28
Murder	32	6	38	76
Homicide	1	3	3	7
Rape	7	1	2	10
Sexual Assault	12	2	1	15
Burglary	14	0	6	20
Theft	19	1	10	30
Drugs	117	0	8	125
Robbery	48	0	0	48
<b>Number of Stories</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>702</b>

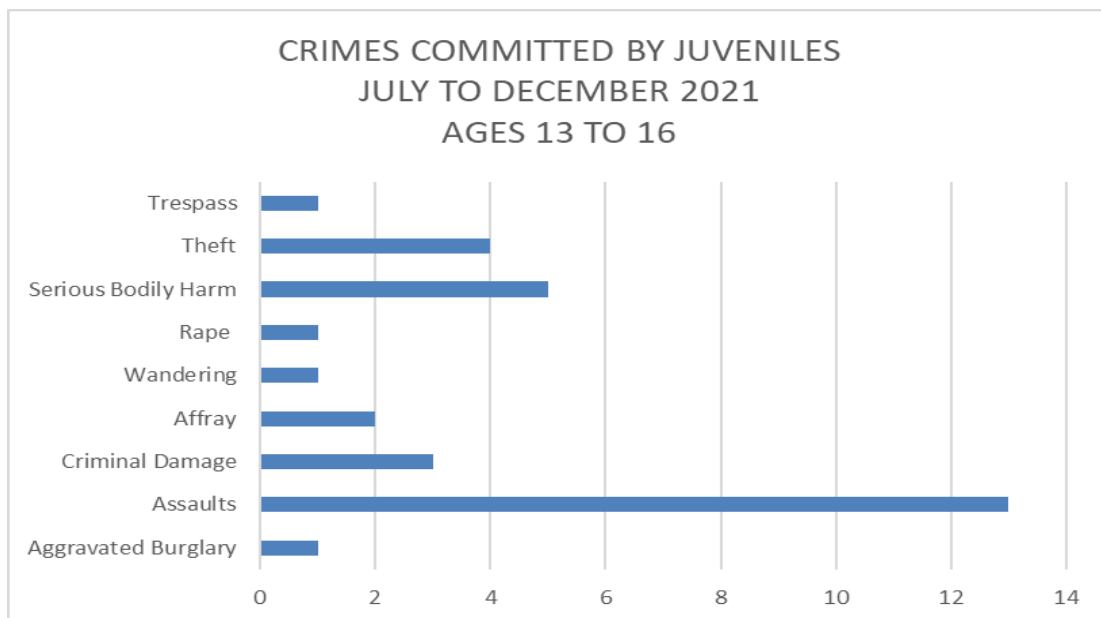
**Table 9 - Data on stories collected by Media Institute of the Caribbean on the involvement of Youth in Crime and Violence for the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

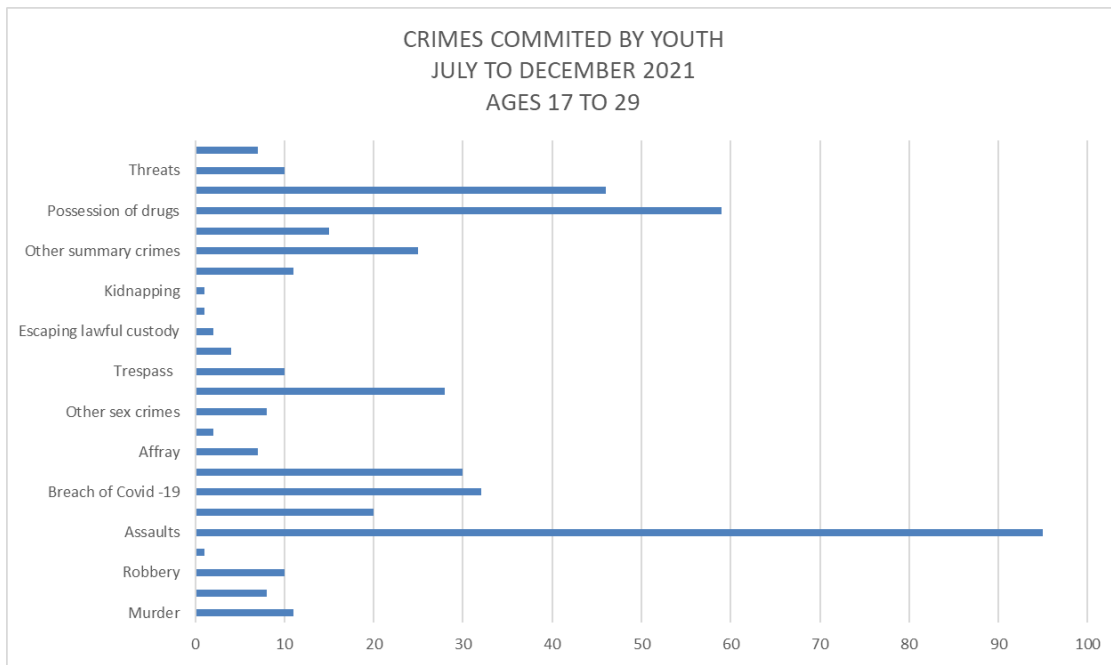
## Barbados

The coverage of youth crime is a reasonable indication of the reality on the ground and what concerns citizens. This indicates that the media is not favoring any type of crime over another but are fairly representing what happens. The notable exception is stories about assault which is the leading cause of criminal charges at 34% overall, but assault stories only comprise 5% in our keyword search of media stories (see Table 2). The explanation for this could be that some assaults are minor and as such may not be considered newsworthy even though there is a charge.

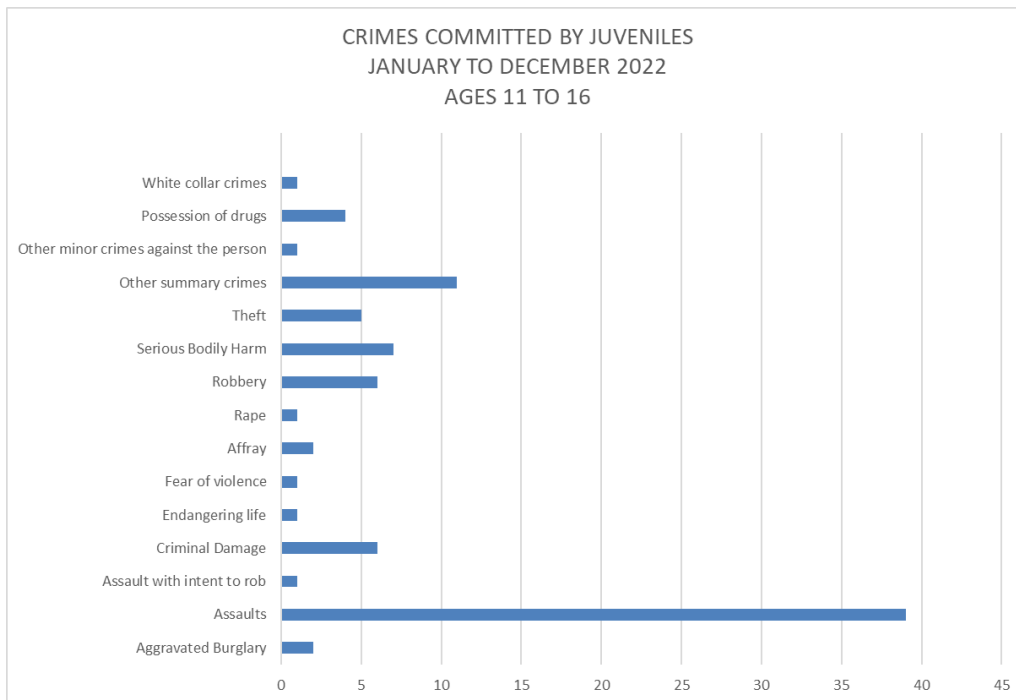
In a televised interview June 28, 2022, with Barbados Police Commissioner Richard Boyce, he revealed that possession of illegal firearms had increased, including high powered weapons. Despite successes in retrieving illegal firearms, he expressed concern that these seem to be replenished quickly. A further concern was that the use of firearms in crimes was also on the increase. He stated that assault, serious bodily harm and theft were the dominant criminal activities of 11–16-year-old juveniles. The most common crimes committed by 17–25-year-old youth are assault, serious bodily harm, theft, murder and robbery. This is confirmed in data provided by the Barbados Police Service ([Appendix 2](#)), Office of the Commissioner for this report which reveals:

**July-December 2021** – In this 6 month period 473 youth were charged for crime. 30 Juveniles/children 13-16 were charged for crimes and 83,3% of the offences could be considered serious with assaults being the largest category at 43.3%. 443 youth 17-29 were charged for crimes and 76% of the offences could be considered serious with assaults being the largest category at 21.4%. Possession of drugs 13.3%, theft 10.3%, Criminal damage 6.7%, serious bodily harm 6.3% and illegal firearm/ammunition 3.3% are other noteworthy categories.

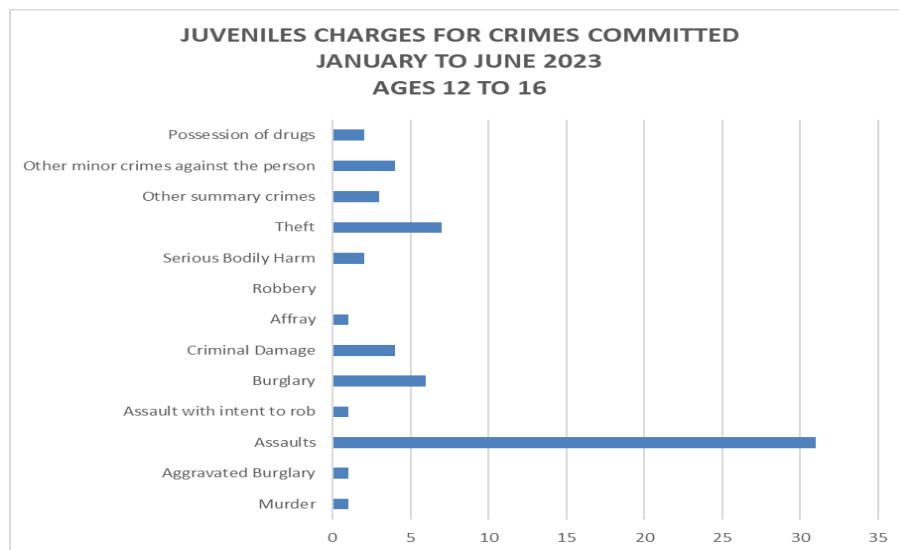
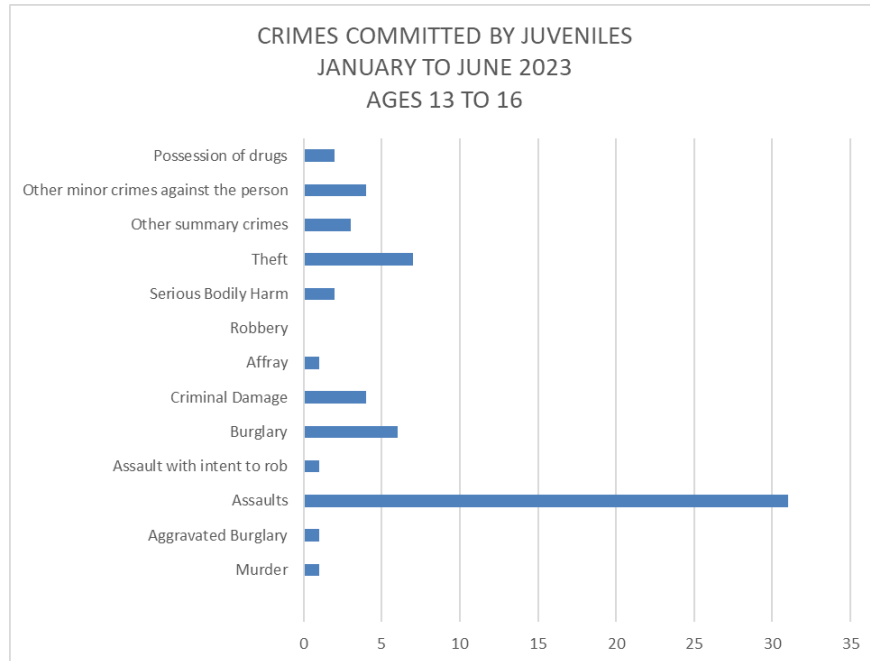




**January-December 2022** – 904 youth were charged for crime during this 12 month period. 88 juveniles/ children were charged for crimes and 81.8% of the crimes could be considered serious with assault being the largest category at 44.3%. 816 youth 17-29 were charged for crimes and 85.3% of the offences could be considered serious with assaults being the largest category at 22.4%. Possession of drugs 17.4%, theft 10.9%, Criminal damage 7.8%, illegal firearm/ammunition 6.7% and serious bodily harm 4.1% are other noteworthy categories.



**January-June 2023** – 512 youth were charged for crime in this 6-month period. 66 juveniles/children were charged for crimes and 81.8% could be considered serious crimes with assault being the largest category at 46.9%. 446 youth 17-29 were charged for crimes and 85.3% of the offences could be considered serious with assaults being the largest category at 25.5%. Possession of drugs 12.1%, theft 10.5%, Criminal damage 9.2%, illegal firearm/ammunition 6.3% and serious bodily harm 4.9% are other noteworthy categories.



The commissioner’s concern about illegal firearms is reflected in the media comprising 41% of total youth crime incident content in the form of editorial, stories, and commentary. Approximately 82% of all youth crimes can be categorized as serious and this too is reflected in the reporting. It is also important to note that roughly 40% of all stories are about social interventions and preventing crime so there is some balance being brought to the overall picture.



## Grenada

The only youth crime statistics available in Grenada were compiled for a police presentation about juveniles arrested and charged in 2015, 2020-2022 and should not be considered official statistics as they were not formally released or available. For the period under review, records from the Police show that there were charges of 475 offenses committed by people under the age of 18. In 2015 - 156 were charged; in 2020 - 145 were charged; in 2021 – 96 were charged and in 2022 – 78 were charged which indicates a pattern of decline.

According to the police presentation about juveniles arrested and charged in 2015, 2020-2022, the most common crimes (62.5% of all offences) in order were: (see [Appendix 3](#))

- 1) Causing harm – 114
- 2) Housebreaking – 63
- 3) Possession of marijuana – 36
- 4) Sex with someone over 13 years old - 27
- 5) Grievous harm – 23
- 6) Stealing from a dwelling house – 23
- 7) Sex with someone under 13 years old – 11

We are unable to verify the accuracy of the statistics so we cannot determine how representative or indicative they are. Also, there is no disaggregation of the data so we cannot determine the distribution of the offences over the time period which leaves us with some important questions. How reliable is the indication of a decline of charges for juveniles? What is the distribution of incidents 2015-2022? Have the incidents of more serious crimes increased or decreased proportionately between 2015-2022? Because it is virtually impossible for the media to carry stories on juvenile crime, we are unable to make any comparison for this demographic.

Media stories and opinion pieces about youth crime involving 18-35 years old paints a different story showing an increase in the frequency of and concern about gun and gun related crimes. This reporting accounts for approximately 45% of all youth crime stories. Having no official statistics, we are unable to comment on how representative the media reporting is in comparison, but editorials and opinion pieces reflect great concern about gun and gun related crimes such as possession of illegal weapons and ammunition, homicides and murder and indicate these are the major youth crimes.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> [MTV Grenada 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023](#)



## St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Statistics provided by the Royal St. Vincent & the Grenadines Police Force for the period 2012-2023 indicate an overall pattern of decline in crime over the period but shows increases 2021-2023.<sup>17</sup> The table below indicates the overall figures.

OVERALL FIGURES FROM 2012 TO 2023 YEARS	TOTAL CRIMES REPORTED
2012	7540
2013	6734
2014	5988
2015	5915
2016	5736
2017	5621
2018	6065
2019	5384
2020	5149
2021	3997
2022	4070
2023	4134

**Table 10 - Total crimes reported in Grenada for the period 2012-2023**

While the overall increases in crimes are modest with a 1.8% increase 2021-2022 and a 1.5% increase 2022-2023, as shown in the table above, there has been a sharp increase in murders. The report shows that ending, “the 31st December 2023, the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force recorded 52 murders, (43 done using a firearm). Up to the same date in 2022, there were 42 murders (28 done using a firearm). The year 2022 ended with what at that time was a record breaking 42 murders. The year 2023 ended with 10 more murders than 2022 and thus, breaking the previously set record.” It is interesting to note that the report focuses mainly on murders committed and also of note is the “solve” rate for gun related homicides which is 8.69% 2021-2023, clearly indicating which category of crime is priority. Violent crimes, theft and damage to property also increased by roughly 18%, 8% and 17% respectively over the period.

The dominant concern for violent and gun and gun related crimes is reflected in media reports accounting for 69.6% of the keyword search for murder (27.6%), guns (25%), ammunition (10%) and assault (7%) as the major categories. Media reports and opinion pieces reflect the trend of growing crime especially gun and gun related crime. In the Searchlight online story “Gun Amnesty Takes Effect From Today”, published March 1, 2024, it stated that:

*“Over the past two years, crimes involving the use of illegally possessed firearms and ammunition have been plaguing St Vincent and the Grenadines with two homicide records being broken in consecutive years.”*

<sup>17</sup> Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines police force crime analysis unit statistical report a general analysis of [the trend of crime for the period 2012 – 2023](#) and assessing the crime situation for 2023.



Reports have also been carried about Police Youth Clubs, The Prime Ministerial Council On Youth and more demonstrating some attention, but these stories are only 5% which could suggest that they are underrepresented.

### 5.3 Key Findings

The key findings are linked to the indicators in [Appendix 4](#) and were developed to align to the objective of the research project as articulated in the Executive Summary.

#### Content analysis

To try and establish a profile of youth crime reporting in the 3 countries being studied, we conducted a key word search of articles in print, online, radio, television, and social media. Most of the stories referenced are from print and e-papers as these are relatively easier to archive. Most of what is posted on social media is done by the average citizen with little regard for accuracy and fact checking. Social media is particularly prone to fake news, staged events, dated reposts passed off as current events, inuendo and conjecture. As such, social media was not considered a reliable source of information for analyzing the behavior of media. Table 9 indicates that Barbados has the most stories about crime, but it is important to note that the statistics need to be viewed in context. More data was available in Barbados and both Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines have weekly newspapers which means there are less pages per week to dedicate to stories, including crime stories. Barbados also has a larger population with more diverse media options which will automatically lead to more stories overall, including crime stories. Radio also had a stronger showing in the media track in Barbados adding to the number of stories and by extension keywords.

Approximately 45% of stories presented in Barbados focus on intervention and youth programmes and the need to combat crime, which in and of itself can be a good thing. The remaining stories focus on incidents. This figure has been skewed because of the focus in print stories including drug and drug related issues. Of 65 stories, only two (3%) were about incidents which is the opposite of the trend for all other categories of crime. The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) has been dominant in highlighting issues associated with drug use and the drug trade.

In the Barbados Nation, February 17, 2023, a story “At Risk boys Need Love and care Too” speaks about an “upsurge” in gun violence. On the same page there is a brief story “Why so Much Hatred?” about a young man who was murdered – shot and killed. The headlines in no way suggested that gun violence and murder were integral to the stories. Such “soft” headlines could be considered not “alarming” and at worst, misleading. Perhaps, in an effort to protect tourism, stories are “sanitized” as suggested by some journalists. Media sources in Grenada reveal that juvenile crime is under reported and indicate that the story must be a “major event” to be carried and it is difficult to get information from the security forces. Of 42 stories carried, 10 (27%) of all stories focused on intervention programmes or offering advice for dealing with youth crime which suggests there is an attempt to report on youth crime in a more balanced, holistic manner.

In St Vincent & the Grenadines journalists believe that the representation of youth crime incidents in the media is reasonably representative. Even though it has the smallest population in this study it has a high proportional incidence of key words in the majority of categories. The notable exception is gangs with zero. Overall, media reports show the dominant weapon used in crimes is guns/firearms with the most dominant category is gun related – guns, firearms and ammunition. This lines up consistently with crime statistics released by the Royal St, Vincent & Grenadines Police Force.

Most stories in the media track were about incidents of youth crime, with only 5% of them were about the other aspects of crime like preventing crime, rehabilitation, intervention programmes, the role of family and community, creating alternate opportunities and so on. This suggests that more could be done to explore other aspects of crime and crime deterrence.

What is common in reporting in all 3 countries is that males are the main perpetrators of violence. There is an opportunity to do deeper investigative stories and follow up on the causes behind youth crime. Similarly, there is opportunity to do stories about solutions including parenting, professional help and creating meaningful occupation for the boys and young men. Doing so is dependent on a combination of editorial priority and having adequate staff, time and resources.

### **Narrative approach: How is youth crime framed in headlines and articles?**

In all three countries the focus is mostly on incidents as they occur, and headlines and stories tend to be neutral and descriptive about the incident. Headlines and stories of articles concerning interventions and programmes are similarly neutral and descriptive.

Headlines for editorial and opinion pieces are similarly not sensationalized and are neutral and descriptive e.g. “Medicating the Roots of Crime an Violence in the Caribbean”, Now Grenada, May 8, 2023. In the content of opinion and editorial pieces, youth crime and the impact of youth crime are framed as being undesirable, negative and should be reversed.

### **Tone of the reporting**

The tone of the reporting is similar between all 3 countries with simple, non-judgmental almost matter-of-fact presentation of what are understood to be the facts. While there were stories that had the potential to be presented in a more sensational manner, this rarely happened. The most “sensational” aspects of stories would be the quotations of eyewitnesses etc. and even these are measured. If any fear or disquiet happens because of a story, it would likely be due to the content of the story, not how the story is presented.



News

### Teen charged with slashing man's neck

News Admin  
18 Jan 2022 15:55 AST

[www.iwnsvg.com](http://www.iwnsvg.com)

The accused, Lydon Bynoe.

A 19-year-old Old Montrose resident will on March 7 be the subject of a preliminary inquiry into the wounding of a fellow villager, whose neck was slashed on June 20, 2021 — Father's Day.

On Monday, Lydon Bynoe, who is unemployed, appeared before the Kingstown Magistrate's Court charged with wounding Roger Brazil, a 52-year-old tailor of the same address, by cutting him on his throat, left thumb, left index and left middle finger with a cutlass, with the intent to do so.

He was not required to plead to the indictable charge and Senior Magistrate Rickie Burnett granted EC\$6,000 bail and ordered Bynoe to have no contact with Brazil.

Bynoe is to report to the Central Police Station on Mondays between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. and has to surrender his travel documents to the court.

The matter was adjourned and transferred to the Serious Offences court for today (Tuesday).

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i Witness News, January 18, 2022 (St. Vincent & the Grenadines)

In terms of presentation of stories, media ethics and human rights are being well observed as those under 18 are generally not identified in stories in all countries.

### Lack of Context and Nuance

Because stories are so incident driven in Grenada and more so, St. Vincent & the Grenadines there is a lack of exploration and nuance about youth crime and violence. The voices of the church, NGOs and even government are fairly silent in the media about prevention programmes and rehabilitation efforts. There is sometimes mention in stories and editorial about poverty, poor education and unemployment contributing to the rise in crime, but there is little in-depth analysis.

Barbados has proportionately more stories about initiatives to address youth crime and violence and many of these are sourced from state releases. However, there is room to go into greater detail about the reasons for youth crime and preventative measures. Some of this is explored on Down To Brass Tacks a call-in radio show on 92.9FM VOB which by its nature invites discussion. Interestingly 97% of print stories in Barbados concerning drugs were about the issues surrounding the drug trade and drug abuse – legislation, mental effects of drugs, new types of drugs children using drugs and so on providing valuable information, context and nuance. An excellent example is “Drug Shift” published in Barbados Today, January 31, 2023.

Tuesday, January 31, 2023
Page 4



# Drug shift

**By Anasta Henry**

Legislative changes appear to have led to a reduction in persons charged with possession of cannabis.

However, Research and Information Officer at the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA), Laura Foster, is reporting an increase in the number of persons being charged with more serious offences, such as trafficking and supplying the drug.

"This seems to coincide with those legislative changes and it may be a reflection of the fact that there are fewer persons being charged now with small-scale possession as opposed to before the legislation was changed," Foster said as she delivered the 2021 Barbados Drug Information Network (BARDIN) report, at the NCSA office, Corner of 1st Avenue Belleville and Pine Road, St Michael, on Tuesday.

Recent legislative changes include the enactment of the Medicinal Cannabis Act 2019, Saccharin Cannabis Act 2019 and the Drug Abuse (Prevention and Control) (Amendment) Act 2020.

Foster has also observed that there has been a marked decrease in people seeking help for substance use.

"Speaking on the number of cannabis possession cases adjudicated in the Magistrates' Courts in 2019 versus 2021, Foster said statistics show that there was a sharp decline of 71 per cent in the number of cases in the court system related to possession of the drug.

"This would translate into a reduced load from the penal system but it also will then mean that that will bring with it lower costs, and that includes lower costs when it comes to incarceration in cases where persons receive a custodial sentence. So that is definitely an advantage both judicially and economically.

"Now at the individual level, we know that persons with a criminal record tend to be stigmatised. As a result they tend to have difficulties getting employment, they tend to have difficulties getting travel visas and they face other forms of discrimination as well. For them, avoiding a criminal charge is going to be a plus, but that is not the be-all and the end-all.

"We need to make sure that persons who are depending on the substance can receive the help that is needed," she said.

And while there has been a decrease in persons being charged, Foster noted that the NCSA has not observed an increase in counselling for clients even though the Drug Abuse Act makes provision for persons to be sent to the council for assessment and counselling.

"She noted that there was also a marked decrease in the number of persons seeking treatment for substance use and disorders since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Foster said these developments mean that the NCSA must begin talks with key stakeholders in an attempt to figure out why persons with substance abuse issues are not being referred to the council.

"It's important for us to make sure that everything is in place so that persons can be diverted to the NCSA as we have intended," she said.

The research officer also said that Barbados should follow the example of other countries and monitor the impact of marijuana use at a national level.

She explained that international and regional studies have provided mixed results, revealing a relationship between relaxed marijuana laws and its use while others show that there is no relationship.

"As the NCSA we are planning a secondary school survey. We are hoping that we can get that off the ground before the end of the academic year and it should help us to partially address the data gap that we need to close.

We need to do some more surveys, nationally representative ones, but we also do some qualitative research. We can also do some rapid assessment studies so that we can get speedy results on certain things as well and we can focus on adolescents and other special groups," she said.

BARDIN is a tool used by the NCSA to monitor the local drug situation, and through the publication of annual reports, it continues to be a critical source of valid and reliable information for both Government and key stakeholders.

The 2021 report is the 11th in the BARDIN series, and points to a situation that remains largely unchanged with traditional drugs such as alcohol, marijuana and cocaine continuing to be dominant.

The report also shows that young people, particularly those age 40 and under, are most likely to be involved in the drug situation, either as treatment seekers or drug offenders.

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**Laura Foster NCSA Research & Information Officer.**

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## French minister meets with PM Mottley

Barbados' push to get reform of the global financial system is getting strong support from one of the world's most powerful and advanced economies.

During a joint press conference at Haro Court on Tuesday evening, France's Minister of State for Developing Territories, Chryssoula Zacharopoulou reiterated her country's support for reform of the global financial system.

She recalled that President of France Emmanuel Macron had announced last year that his country would be hosting a conference in June this year to help develop a new global financial pact, with a focus on using the Special Drawing Rights (SDR) to guide finances to developing countries.

She noted that France had identified four topics on which progress was needed and was in discussion with the Barbados Prime Minister on what else could be added.

"First of all, providing budgetary space and liquidity to vulnerable countries along with the debt treatment, SDR allocations, but also with the overall evolution of the World Bank and other multilateral development banks."

"Second, supporting the development of (the) local private sector in the most vulnerable countries, to foster quality jobs and ensure long-term growth."

"Third, finding ways to scale up investment in green infrastructure in order to accelerate the green sustainable transition and last but not least, we need to identify new ways to mobilise additional financial resources to address increasing needs such as climate adaptation and loss and damage," she explained.

Admitting that the objectives were ambitious, the French minister said to achieve them would require a "collective engagement", as she indicated that the upcoming June summit must be "an inclusive one".

SDR are International Monetary (IMF)



**Chryssoula Zacharopoulou and Prime Minister Mottley speaking at this evening's press conference.**

reserve assets, which are used to assist vulnerable countries experiencing severe debt crises due to shocks including impacts from climate crisis and pandemics. Developed countries are allowed to allocate their SDR to developing countries, which can be used to assist in debt payment to the IMF.

Indicating that France and the European Union have made major contributions towards the fight for international solidarity and global justice, Zacharopoulou pointed to the decision taken by France last year to reallocate some US\$100 billion worth of SDR to the world's most vulnerable countries, as part of a G20 initiative.

In March last year, France announced reallocation of about 20 per cent of its share, or some US\$4 billion, and has committed to reach 30 per cent this year.

Zacharopoulou, who is the first French minister to visit Bridgetown on official business, was on a one-day trip to the island for talks with Prime Minister Mottley and other members of her administration ahead of the upcoming June meeting in Paris to negotiate the financial pact.

Lauding Mottley for her "huge" contribution to global awareness around climate justice and the need for increased financing opportunities for vulnerable states, the French minister said France shared Barbados' assessment regarding the major global challenges.

"Most importantly, we share your determination expressed in your Bridgetown Agenda to address the root causes of these challenges," she said.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Mia Mottley warned that countries can no longer sit by and do nothing to help address the losses of the climate crisis, which she warned was resulting in increased poverty and food insecurity for developing nations.

"We live in a world that is threatened by too many things now for us to even contemplate remaining still," said Mottley, as she described the support from France as critical.

"This is not just about climate, but it is also about our continued determination to start the development of our people. If we allow the threats of climate and the pandemic, and the violence and of the digital divide and of food insecurity to crowd out the traditional ambition of development as captured by the Sustainable Development Goals, then our people will come to suffer and, regrettably, the world is going to become a very inhospitable place for us to live," said the Prime Minister.

She suggested that the global financial institutions were not adequately meeting the needs of developing countries, declaring that middle income countries were at risk of polarization because of the climate crisis, the pandemic and other exogenous shocks including rising oil prices and inflation.

"To that extent, we therefore need to change how these institutions respond to us," she declared.

Mottley said the global financial pact is to ensure that developing countries are able to get the required fiscal space to respond to the issues.

"We need to look and see how we can use legal clauses to be able to provide the space for us," as she pointed to Barbados' decision to insert natural disaster clauses, which suspends the country's debt payments for two years if the event like island is hit by a natural disaster.

She noted that increases in insurance and reinsurance rates resulting from mismanagement and underinsurance among the population, requiring government's intervention. She recalled that in Hurricane Elias's case, 90 per cent of the houses that were damaged were people below the poverty line and 95 per cent of those people were uninsured.

"Thinking France for its commitment regarding the SDR, Mottley said "If we can get more countries doing the same thing, then we would begin to have a pool that can be used to amplify the resources of the multilateral development banks, whose trust to resources need to be amplified significantly.

"And we believed significantly from governments. So, we believe that when there are global threats as well, we need to see where other sources of money can come from," said Mottley. (MM)

## Neglect of Positive Stories

Focusing predominantly on negative stories could contribute to a distorted view of youth and undermine efforts to highlight successful interventions and positive outcomes. The fact that negative things happen and are reported on is not an indication of focus on negative stories. There is no observed focus or intent to specifically carry negative stories. Analysis of media stories reveal that they essentially report what has happened and just give the facts and are therefore objective, impassive telling of incidents.

## Long-Term Effects

The potential long-term effects of the media coverage on youth involved in crime is beyond the scope of this study. To do a proper evaluation and tracking of how coverage contributes to stigma and hinder rehabilitation and reintegration efforts would have to be benchmarked and then done over time. Such a study would have to consider a few things including:

1. Is the frequency of stories problematic?
2. Is the frequency of the stories a reasonable reflection of reality?
3. Is the content of the stories inherently problematic?
4. Is the presentation of the stories reasonable and fair? Or are they sensationalized and fear mongering?
5. What are respondents' reactions to these stories?
6. How much of respondents' reactions is due to their own experiences and interactions with crime and criminals in their society?
7. How much faith do respondents have in law enforcers and the legal system to combat crime?

A Media Analysis of the Coverage of Youth Involvement in Crime and Violence and Trafficking in Persons (June 2021 to June 2023) in the Eastern Caribbean 41



### Language and labels: What language is used to describe youth involved in criminal activities?

Adjectives like “delinquent,” “offender,” or “troubled youth” don’t feature in stories. The stories refer to age, sex and occupation mostly. In the case of high-profile stories of perpetrators or victims over 18 their names will appear.

Socio demographics don’t impact how individuals in stories are referred to. The only demographic that makes a difference is age, where individuals under the age of 18 are not identified.

### Criminalization and Stereotyping:

There is little if any evidence in the stories in Barbados, Grenada or St. Vincent and the Grenadines that reporting may contribute to the criminalization of youth by perpetuating stereotypes, associating certain demographics or neighborhoods with criminal behavior. If a crime occurs in a neighborhood this tends to be reported as a statement of fact, not a judgement of the area. Many stories are releases carried from security forces which are fact oriented, deliberate and dispassionate.

While this may seem pedantic, it has its place. Care must be taken in the presentation of information so that when cases go to trial there is little space for legal “blowback”. Care too, must be taken to help ensure that cases are not tried in the court of public opinion. Such care also explains why photos, language and other visual or audio cues are used sensitively to not reinforce negative stereotypes. There are times though where photos will capture a scene which may be considered negative e.g. suspects in handcuffs, but that is the truth of what happened at the scene.

### Representation: How are youth portrayed in accompanying images or videos?

The visuals typically are a reasonable reflection of individuals, incidents and the environment they happen in while not being gory or insensitive. A good example of this is seen in the following story where a dead female was found in a village.



i Witness News, May 12, 2022 (St. Vincent & the Grenadines)

**Are there differences in representation based on factors such as race, socioeconomic status, geographic location, or gender?**

No. Examination of stories show no difference in representation irrespective of race, socioeconomic status, geographic location or gender. However, there is a lack of diversity of youth experiences in media stories. Media reports may not adequately reflect the diversity of youth experiences, overlooking variations in socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural influences, and individual circumstances. Homogenizing youth involvement in crime can contribute to simplistic and misleading generalizations.

**Context and causes: Does the media provide context for youth crime?**

Stories that delve into the root causes of crime are lacking as the focus is primarily about the criminal act or incident. There will be quotations of shock and surprise at the surge in crime but little in terms of the root causes other than a reported conflict between parties or individuals. Underlying or contributing factors such as poverty, education, unemployment, family dynamics, parenting, subculture, peer pressure, gang culture, role models and how they possibly impact crime while mentioned, are not explored in any substantial way in Grenada or St Vincent & the Grenadines.

For all categories of crime in Barbados excluding drugs, there is a greater emphasis and reporting on what is being done, what should be done and even what may be causal factors. While the stories are well structured, they too would benefit from increased depth, exploration and discussion concerning the context of youth crime.<sup>18</sup>



Barbados Today, Thursday, January 26, 2023

**Accuracy and statistics: What sources of information are used to form the basis of the reporting?**

18 News Night CBC Television, "Focus on youth as part of effort to tackle crime." 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022



Both primary and secondary sources of information are used for reporting. The primary information is usually from going to the scene of a crime or incident, conducting interviews with eyewitnesses and other sources, or going to court. Secondary information is mainly from security force releases and statements. Media houses in Barbados, Grenada and St. Vincent have difficulty getting reliable and timely information from security forces. As such, there is little reference to crime statistics and stories have to use generalizations such as “increase”, “decrease”, “more” or “less”.

### **Are statistical representations accurate and contextualized?**

Most of the reports focus on isolated incidents and as such the use of statistics is limited. Most comments about the broader stories of crime are anecdotal in all countries and as such don't rely on statistics. Authorities in Barbados tend to be data driven and it is reported that they are reluctant to answer questions without data to substantiate answers. As a result of this there are few stories that highlight statistics but when they do, this is usually well done and contextualized. An excellent example is the One on One interview with Police Commissioner Richard Boyle<sup>19</sup> where his entire presentation is data driven.

### **Does there appear to be an effort to fact-check and verify information before publication?**

There seem to be no apologies or corrections made by media houses or reported legal action taken against them which would indicate that proper fact-checking and verification is being done.

### **Impact on perception: How might media coverage influence public perception of youth crime?**

It is beyond the scope of this study to properly assess if the reporting contributes to fear, stigmatization, or empathy towards the youth involved. It is of note though that while reporting highlights fear, disappointment, regret etc. about youth crime and its effects, there was no indication that media coverage caused this. People were responding to the events themselves. There was also no evidence of complaint that the media were not carrying too many or too few crime stories.

### **Are there examples of responsible journalism that seek to educate and inform rather than sensationalize?**

Yes, there are examples of responsible journalism, particularly in Barbados that seek to inform and educate. It is important to note that in none of the countries being studied have we seen evidence that traditional media is sensationalizing stories. The stories reporting on youth involvement in crime and violence are typically sober and responsible even though they may be lacking in depth.

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<sup>19</sup> CBC TV8, One on One interview with Police Commissioner Richard Boyle. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024





**The Barbados Advocate**

Saturday January 22, 2022

England, West Indies series bowls off today

– Page 19

## ‘CUTTING OUT VIOLENCE’

### Barbering project launched

THE Division of Youth Affairs' Youth Development Programme recently teamed up with community volunteers Paul Harwood of Barber Kutz Barbershop, to introduce the "Cutting Out Violence" barbering project.

The three-month training programme, which began on Monday, January 17, will expose ten young men and women aged 16 to 25 from the Pine and Wilkey, St. Michael, and Dash Valley, St. George, communities, to the art and skill of barbering.

Youth Programme Co-ordinator for the "Cutting Out Violence" initiative, Adriana Waithe, shared that, "The initiative was designed in such a way that the participants would not only be exposed to barbering but they would also be exposed to life skills."

She added that the participants completed a one-week developmental workshop prior to the start of the practical programme, covering topics on team building, emotional control, conflict resolution, communication, marketing, personal branding and image, business model canvas, hygiene, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and business registration.

Ms. Waithe pointed out that these topics were selected to ensure that the participants were equipped with the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to properly conduct themselves as employees or self-employed individuals, upon completion of the three-month practical training course.

"We are of the impression that as we continue to engage the youth in positive programmes and initiatives, they would steer away from acts of crime and violence hence the name "Cutting out Violence", the Co-ordinator explained.

Harwood of Barber Kutz



Owner of Barber Kutz Barbershop, Paul Harwood, being presented with barbering equipment by Acting Principal Youth Development Officer, Andrea Titus.

Barbershop has been voluntarily teaching young persons in the community for several years and expressed his gratitude for being able to work with the Youth Development Programme to strengthen what he has been doing to make a positive impact

in his community. He stated that, "Most people in Barbados will look at the Pine as someplace where there is a lot of crime, a lot of violence and any small part I can play in the community, whether it's personal development, a skill, I

believe it helps people to empower themselves." As part of the partnership, Barber Kutz Barbershop has been retrofitted to accommodate the programme, and recently Mr. Harwood was presented with two chairs, capes, and

machines by Principal Youth Development Officer (acting), Andrea Titus, and Senior Youth Commissioner, Elizabeth Bowen, at the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment's office, Sky Mall, Haggatt Hall, St. Michael.

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**Barbados Advocate, Saturday, January 22, 2022**

4. MONDAY, MAY 8, 2023. DAILY NATION.

## News

### Teenaged girls found after three weeks, in police custody

THE TWO 14-YEAR-OLD GIRLS who have been missing from home for the past three weeks are now in police custody.

This was confirmed yesterday by acting communications and public affairs officer of the Barbados Police Service, Inspector Stephen Griffith.

"Missing juveniles Runeka Husbands and Tanik Jemmott are now in police custody. The Barbados Police Service wishes to thank members of the public and the press for their kind cooperation and assistance in this matter," he stated.

Tanik and Runeka left their homes in Haynesville, St James, on April 11 and 13, respectively, but did not return, causing their

parents to report them missing.

However, the girls remained active on social media posting provocative videos and posts indicating that they were allegedly being abused at home.

The Child Care Board launched an investigation into the allegations but Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs, Kirk Humphrey, said last week that they would not comment on the case any further.

Kimberly St Louis, Tanik's mother, and Annaka Prescod, mother of Runeka, denied the claims and pleaded for the girls to come home.

St Louis told the DAILY NATION yesterday she

was relieved her daughter was found, describing it situation as emotional.

"Since morning they [police] brought her here I called her father and let him deal with it. When she came here, her head was down and she was crying. I just can't deal with that right now. I'm glad she is safe but she still has a long road to go."

"She made the police look real bad and me too, but at the end of the day people going to talk with her they want to talk about, she is still my daughter. So as I say, I have to show her tough love and got to let her get the discipline and help that she needs because what she did was not right," she added.

Efforts to reach Prescod were unsuccessful. (R)

**Daily Nation, May 8, 2023**

### Policy and solutions: Does the media discuss policy implications and potential solutions?

While in Barbados there are several stories about preventive measures, rehabilitation and community-based initiatives, they tend to be more in a reporting style rather than a thorough discussion or analysis. The exception to this is topics of drug abuse and illegal drugs. There is some mention too in Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines about policy implications and potential solutions but there is limited discussion. Most of this comes more in the form of editorials or public feedback and not investigative journalism, as in the example from Grenada: Now Grenada, July 10, 2023.



### **Is there a balance between reporting on problems and highlighting positive efforts and success stories related to youth crime?**

Looking at traditional media output in Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, stories are dominated by incidents of youth crime and violence as opposed to success stories and positive efforts. In Grenada 27% of stories are about positive efforts and St. Vincent & the Grenadines falls significantly behind with only 5%. As such, St. Vincent & the Grenadines is the least balanced and has the most room for improvement.

Reporting in Barbados is the most balanced demonstrating a higher level of emphasis on positive efforts and interventions at 45-50% which seems to reflect a corresponding higher level of initiatives there.

It is also important that when NGOs and programmes are dynamic, doing new things and releasing interesting information regularly makes a substantial difference in coverage. Otherwise, there is nothing newsworthy and different for media to report, limiting coverage, reporting and exposure. It is observed that the more dynamic NGOs and other stakeholders were, the more presence of positive efforts and success stories appeared in the media.

### **Impact on Public Perception and Policy:**

A proper impact assessment would have to be done to determine the impact of media on public perception and policy and that is beyond the scope of this report. Listening to the interactions on the call-in radio programmes, the public is willing to engage bringing multiple perspectives to the issues which, in turn, should impact on public awareness and thereby perception. While there is some evidence of responsiveness of authorities to incidents, the actions have typically been to address issues at hand and this study cannot determine the extent to which policy, which by nature is long-term, has been impacted.

### **Diversity of Voices: Whose perspectives are included in the reporting?**

Most stories give perspectives of the security forces, victims, family, and community members. Reports from Barbados go a step further leads the way with more voices from youth advocates, and experts consulted to provide broader understanding.

### **Is there a diversity of opinions and experiences represented in the coverage?**

Yes. Upon examination of the stories, they come from a diversity of sources and therefore experiences and opinions. Contributions are made by reporters, editorial staff, security forces, social workers, churches, Ministers, the legal profession, NGOs and even reformed criminals. This was most apparent in Barbados with Grenada and St. Vincent following in that order.

## 5.4 Recommendations

While there is significant human resource, economic and information challenges, there are things media can do to improve the level and standard of reporting.

### Internal Actions

1. Present stories on youth crime by consistently identifying them as such. This can be done by publishing the age of the victims and perpetrators as well as recognizing in the story whether it is about a youth or juvenile crime. Headlines could also indicate if the story is about juveniles or youth. This way youth crime stories and issues won't get lost in the general discussion of crime.
2. Access available training and skill capacity building for journalists in the areas of data journalism, human interest reporting and investigative journalism techniques
3. Present more stories about the solutions to crime and what is being done to minimize or prevent crime. This can be done by inviting relevant and qualified contributors to provide content for an expanded more detailed and nuanced perspective. This would have the benefit of minimizing the strain on cost and internal human resources while increasing the diversity of information.
4. Publish more personal, relatable, and in-depth stories about crime as a topic. The focus would be on what individuals can do. What are the implications of crime for your everyday life? What is the economic impact of crime and how does it affect you? What are the warning signs that someone you know may be living or falling into a life of crime? What can you do to help prevent someone you know from being involved in crime? What are good conflict resolution techniques? Where can you seek help? Why it is important to be a whistleblower. How can you report crime safely etc.
5. While many media houses cannot afford to pay for security services, relocation and so on for their journalists, there still should be minimum established practical protocols and policies for the protection of journalists who are reporting crime stories. Chains of automatic action can be established for example:
  - Reporting issues to authorities, legal representatives, and the Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM).
  - Safeguarding story information.
  - Having personal liability insurance for journalists.
  - Access risk assessment training for journalists which helps to determine the level of risk associated with a story and what are the safeguards.
  - Become members of international associations that specialize in safeguarding journalists such as Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and International Press Institute (IPI) and get their assistance as may be necessary.



## Lobbying

- 1) They should lobby for the implementation of Access to Information Acts/Freedom of Information acts to legislate better availability of and access to data from government. In the information age it is unacceptable that basic data of national importance is not available to the press. There is precedent in the region for such legislation in Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago.
- 2) Media houses should join forces across borders with each other and lobby strongly through the Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM) to help ensure the viability of the media industry which faces many challenges. The ACM can also seek support from other associations such as Chambers of Commerce, Media Association Jamaica (MAJ), Press Association of Jamaica (PAJ), International Press Institute (IPI).

It seems that in Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines it is hard to get data because it is not compiled or not compiled regularly. In Barbados it is difficult to get the data from government sources even though it exists as there is no Access To Information Act (ATI)/Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and as such there is nothing compelling government and quasi government agencies to release information.

- 3) Security forces should provide basic top line statistics and information. In lieu of an Access to Information Act, data from security sources concerning youth crime should be available as a matter of course, policy, transparency, and good governance. History has proven in all countries studied that the information CAN be made available and that it is a matter of political will. In the public interest, such information should not be subject to changes in political or management regimes.

As part of this lobby, it should be insisted that security forces must have consistent, regularly scheduled briefings (monthly, quarterly etc.) and have timely briefings and releases to address specific events and occurrences.

- 4) Authorities present crime statistics categorized for age groups: under 12, 12-15, 15-18, 18-20, 20-25 and 25-30. This would allow for easier and more meaningful analysis and projections differentiating children/juveniles from teenagers and young adults. This will allow for better statistical tracking of cohorts over time.

These lobbying efforts should be backed up with a public advertising and editorial campaign by the ACM explaining why media access to information is important in modern democracies and the public interest with the aim of generating public support.

## Economics

One of the biggest impediments is the scale of and viability of the media industry. Newsrooms are under-resourced; journalists are stretched thin and as a priority they need to focus on producing enough content for publication. All things considered they may be doing the best possible under the circumstances, but this leads to a focus on quantity not quality.

Correcting this situation requires specific interventions to stimulate media viability and survival and those recommendations would be beyond the scope of this study because of its depth and specificity. A UNESCO Media Viability Study was done by Media Institute Caribbean (MIC) in December 2021<sup>20</sup> and this provides valuable insight covering regulatory, social and economic variables to help ensure the development of a stronger media industry in small island states using Jamaica as an example. Again, this lobbying should be done via the ACM supported by local media and press associations where they exist. The recommendations made can be adapted appropriately to suit the needs of the different countries. Some examples are:

- 1) Broadcasters could benefit from preferential duties under normal circumstances for broadcast and IT capital equipment.
- 2) Media entities can be given tax waivers, write offs and other incentives for local content production. This approach has led to significant industry growth and dynamism in first world and other countries.
- 3) Regulations need to be put in place to curb the overpowering presence of large tech companies.
- 4) Large tech should pay income tax on all income generated from the markets and those taxes should go to a fund to support traditional media. These funds could be invested in media training in multiple disciplines (journalism, management, marketing, content production and management)
- 5) All government and quasi government organizations should be mandated to only support local media and content providers when promoting locally.
- 6) In the interest of maintaining an independent media and ensuring journalistic output of the highest standards, initiatives such as the Local Journalism Sustainability Act in The United States announced November 22, 2021, tailored to the local context. The provision supports broadcasters' critical local journalism by making a tax credit available for the hiring and retention of local news journalists each year over five years.

## 5.5 Conclusion

Considering the limitations and hindrances to reporting that are experienced in Barbados, Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines, the media is apparently doing a good job of fairly representing youth crime. Our media tacking predominantly documented print stories, followed by online, radio and television in that order. We were not able to track social media in any reliable manner. Reporting on incidents dominated coverage and is characterized by:

- A straightforward reporting style free of sensationalism
- An appropriate ethical approach to the representation of juveniles in writing, photography, videography, and radio, protecting their identities.

20 [UNESCO media viability indicators: research study](#), December 2021



- No stereotyping.
- Respect for the human rights of victims and perpetrators alike.
- A reasonable range of voices on the subject matter including the police, churches, NGOs, trained professionals, communities and the wider public.

Barbados did the best job of carrying stories about youth crime other than incidents. This seems to be due to more existing social programmes and more dynamic actors in that space that ensure publicity for their causes. The stories concerning illegal drugs and drug abuse in Barbados overwhelmingly concentrate on intervention, assistance and the social ramifications of this type of youth crime. This is the exact opposite of what happens with all other stories in all 3 countries.

While there are severe limitations in all countries, in particular Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines, there is still room for improvement of reporting. Some of this can be done internally at media houses at a relatively low cost but that will not result in significant change. It will, however, be a step in the right direction. The greatest possibility of change is going to come from 2 sources:

- 1) Externally funded training programmes as the media houses simply cannot afford the training on their own. To be effective, training must be reasonably ongoing to keep up with new trends, technology, and staff turnover.
- 2) The media needs to engage with the Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM) to drive lobbying concerning:
  - timely provision of news updates, releases, and statistics by the police forces as a short-term measure
  - the implementation of Access to Information / Freedom of Information legislation
  - Economic viability of industry. If the industry is not viable it will limp along and be substandard at best or not survive at worst. A more viable media industry means more viable media houses, more journalists, more follow up and in depth, nuanced reporting and a better served society
  - protection for the overriding influence of big tech media like Google and Metta which threaten the extinction of media in vulnerable small island states. This is not hyperbole as this threat has been recognized and acted upon in countries like the USA and Australia.

The importance of lobbying via the ACM is critical as local media houses and associations will be weary or unwilling to do so alone for fear of repercussions in their home market. The ACM representing the Caribbean media industry is not similarly vulnerable and therefore is the best avenue for lobbying. The media in Barbados, Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines can do better, but they cannot do it on their own.

# 6

## TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS



**POLICE LINE - DO NOT CROSS**



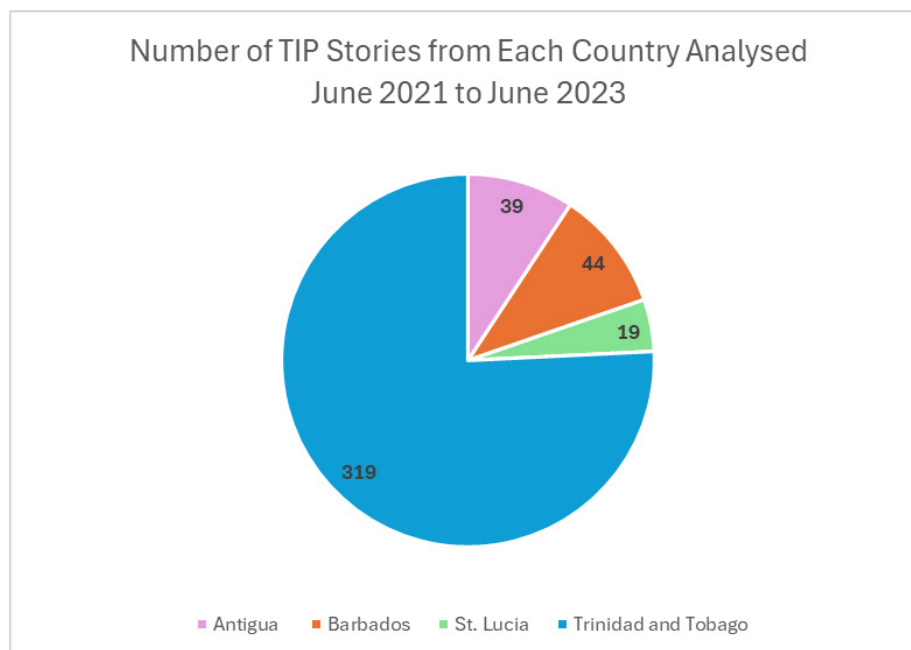
## 6.1 Objective and Scope

Based on the approved methodology ([Appendix 5](#)), this report sought to break down the story content based on specific narratives (i.e. story angles) determined via a comprehensive review of all content captured. This allows us to map how TIP stories are reported and therefore provide insights into gaps or successes in responsible reporting, based on criteria and trends in the reporting.

The assessment of media reporting in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago were developed to gain insight into how the media reports and covers stories on human trafficking based on the following criteria:

1. Frame and Perspective
2. Narrative Approach
3. Sourcing and Verification
4. Sensitivity and Ethical Considerations
5. Collaboration and Advocacy
6. Impact and Solutions
7. Impact and Public Perception
8. Diversity and Inclusivity
9. Technology and Social Media
10. Collaboration and Partnerships

## 6.2 Analysis





COUNTRY	NUMBER OF STORIES
Antigua	39
Barbados	44
St. Lucia	19
Trinidad and Tobago	319

Frame and Perspective and Narrative Approach were the key criteria and focus of the analysis. As the analysis progressed, the other criteria were examined as aspects of these. The media landscape for the countries examined is as follows:

	ANTIGUA & BARBUDA	BARBADOS	SAINT LUCIA	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
<b>Area</b>	440km <sup>2</sup>	430km <sup>2</sup>	617km <sup>2</sup>	5,128km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Population</b>	93,219	287,371	182,790	1,367,558
<b>GDP per capita</b>	\$15,781	\$13,826	\$8,804	\$14,876
<b>Approximate Number of Media Workers</b>	35	80	30	250
<b>Media Houses</b>				
<b>Print</b>	1	2	2	3
<b>Television</b>	2	2	0	5
<b>Radio</b>	2	20	10	36
<b>Online</b>	2	7	5	3
<b>Is there State-owned media (Yes/No)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Social Media Data:</b>				
<b>Internet Users</b>	75.3K	235.4K	140.4K	1.210K
<b>Facebook Users</b>	54.6K	144K	90.1K	754.7K
<b>Instagram Users</b>	371K	171.6K	62.1K	631K

**Table 11 – The Media Landscape in relation to key country demographics for Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago**

As the research reviews and analyzes Caribbean media coverage of Trafficking In Persons (TIP), it is important to contextualize it based on accepted definitions to which media practitioners say they refer as stated below:

*Trafficking in persons: universally defined in the [United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol](#)<sup>21</sup>. Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol states that trafficking in persons “shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the 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. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the 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.”<sup>1</sup>*

*The United States Trafficking Victims and Persons Act (TVPA) of 2000 defines “severe forms of trafficking in*

<sup>21</sup> [United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol](#)



persons” as: sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. A victim need not be physically transported from one location to another for the crime to fall within this definition.

Under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)<sup>22</sup> programs are designed to address shared U.S.-Caribbean security priorities including maritime law enforcement, border and port security, firearms trafficking, transnational crime, gangs, law enforcement and justice sector capacity building, and youth crime and violence prevention. CBSI programs are organized along three overarching pillars: reduce illicit trafficking, increase citizen security, and prevent youth crime and violence. Trafficking In Persons (TIP) is a key aspect of this collaboration.

The media reports on where the countries fall with regards to the Tiers of Human Trafficking was developed by the United States Department of State<sup>23</sup> and is the reference point for monitoring of TIP

COUNTRY	TIP Rating 2021	TIP Rating 2022	TIP Rating 2023
Antigua and Barbuda	Tier 2	Tier 2 Watchlist	Tier 2
Barbados	Tier 2 Watchlist	Tier 2	Tier 2
Saint Lucia	Tier 2	Tier 2 Watchlist	Tier 2
Trinidad and Tobago	Tier 2 Watchlist	Tier 2 Watchlist	Tier 2 Watchlist

Table 12 – TIP Ratings based on the Trafficking in Persons Report by the United States Department of State

### International Conventions

Becoming a signatory to international conventions on human trafficking is crucial for several reasons, as it helps address the global nature of the issue and encourages coordinated efforts among nations. Here are some key points highlighting the importance of signing and adhering to international conventions on human trafficking:

1. Global Cooperation
2. Standardization of Laws.
3. Protection of Victims
4. Prevention and Awareness
5. Accountability and Prosecution
6. Monitoring and Evaluation
7. Resource Sharing
8. Deterrence

<sup>22</sup> Launched in 2010, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) is a U.S. security cooperation partnership with thirteen Caribbean countries including Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>23</sup> The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report is the U.S. Government’s principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking. It is also the world’s most comprehensive resource of governmental anti-trafficking efforts and reflects the U.S. Government’s commitment to global leadership on this key human rights and law enforcement issue.

Overall, signing and adhering to international conventions on human trafficking strengthen the collective response to this heinous crime, fostering a united front against a problem that transcends national borders. To this end all countries in this study have signed on to important international conventions as shown in the table 13 below.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS	ANTIGUA & BARBUDA	BARBADOS	SAINT LUCIA	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
UN Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish Trafficking in Persons (2000)	2010	2001	2013	2007
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the child on the sale of children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000)	2001	Unsigned	2012	Unsigned
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000)	Unsigned	Unsigned	2014	Unsigned
ILO Labour Convention Forced 29 Labour (1930)	1983	1967	1980	1963
2014 ILO Protocol to the forced labour convention	2022	Unsigned	Unsigned	Unsigned
ILO Convention, 105 Abolition of forced labour (1957)	1983	1967	1980	1963
ILO Convention, 182 Elimination of worst forms of child labour (1999)	2002	2000	2000	2003
ILO Convention, 189 ILO Convention Domestic Workers (2011)	2022	Unsigned	Unsigned	Unsigned
Palermo Protocol, 2010	2010	2014	2013	2007

**Table 13 - The International Conventions which refer to human trafficking and signatory status for Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago**



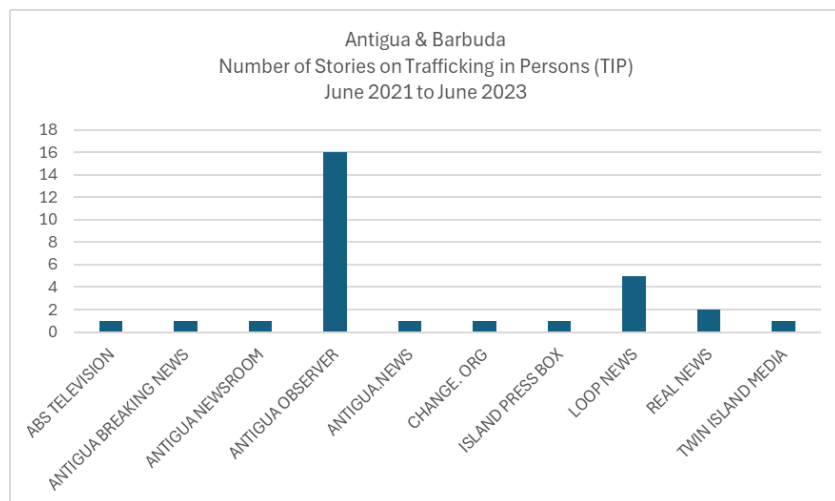
# TIP Legislative Overview

## Antigua and Barbuda

**Antigua and Barbuda** has laws criminalizing human trafficking. The Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act was enacted in 2010 to address this issue. The 2010 Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking, and prescribed penalties of up to 20 years’ imprisonment and a fine for offenses involving an adult victim and up to 25 years’ imprisonment and a fine for those involving a child victim.

### Highlights from TIP Reports by the US State Department

- 2021: The government initiated five trafficking investigations during the reporting period, one for sex trafficking, one for labor trafficking, and three for unspecified exploitation; this compared with zero investigations during the previous reporting period and 10 in 2019. The government did not report initiating any prosecutions for the second consecutive year, compared to three prosecutions in 2019. Authorities continued to prosecute three suspected traffickers from 2018; all three were on bail. The government did not convict any traffickers for the third consecutive year. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking offenses; in past reporting periods, police officers reportedly received administrative sanctions instead of being tried under the trafficking law.
- 2022: The government initiated investigation of 12 suspects in 10 cases during the reporting period, including four cases of sex trafficking, four of labor trafficking, one case involving both sex and labor trafficking, and one case of unspecified exploitation; this compared with five trafficking investigations during the previous reporting period, no investigations in 2020, and 10 in 2019. The government did not report initiating any prosecutions for the third consecutive year. Authorities continued prosecution of one alleged sex trafficker initiated in a previous reporting period. Within the reporting period, the government never convicted a trafficker.



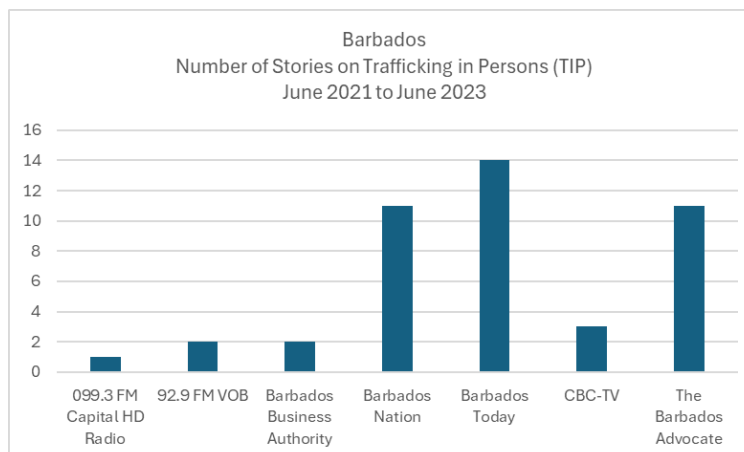
## Barbados

As of 2022, **Barbados** had taken steps to address human trafficking and had legislation in place to criminalize such activities. The Trafficking in Persons Prevention Act of 2016 provides a legal framework for prosecuting traffickers and protecting victims. The law defines trafficking in persons, outlines penalties for offenders, and establishes mechanisms for victim support. Barbados' legislation in this area is the Trafficking in Persons Prevention Act (2016-19) which came into force on June 9, 2016. It is in keeping with the definition of trafficking in persons in the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol).

Sections 3-9 create the offence of trafficking in persons and sets the penalties for the range of offences. The act also sets out the Government's obligations with respect to the protection and safety of victims (Sections 15-18).

### Highlights from TIP Reports

- 2021: The government reported it initiated 40 investigations during the reporting period, 25 for sex trafficking and 15 for labor trafficking, and continued three investigations from previous reporting periods. This compared with two new investigations each in 2020 and 2019. The government initiated prosecution of two Barbadian men for suspected sex trafficking. The government had not reported initiating a prosecution since 2013, and that prosecution remained pending. The government has never convicted a trafficker under the 2016 TIPPA.
- 2022: The government reported it initiated seven investigations of 149 suspects – five cases of sex trafficking, one case of labor trafficking, and one case of an unspecified form of exploitation – compared with initiating investigations of 40 suspects in 2021 (25 for sex trafficking and 15 for labor trafficking) and two new investigations each in 2020 and 2019. The government continued three investigations, two cases of sex trafficking and one case of labor trafficking, initiated in prior reporting periods. The government did not report initiating any new prosecutions, compared with initiating prosecution of two Barbadian men for sex trafficking in 2021; the government had not reported initiating a prosecution prior to that since 2013.





## Saint Lucia

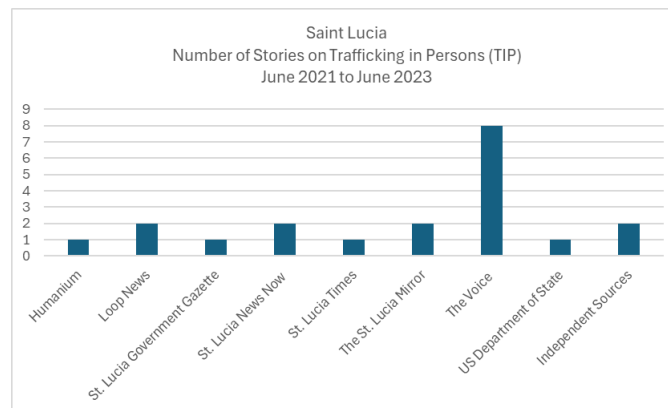
In 2010, the Counter-Trafficking Act was passed in **Saint Lucia** and it contained victim protection provisions, such as privacy measures, the ability to testify via video link, and witness protection, to encourage victims to participate in the investigation and prosecution of traffickers. The law also provided for victim restitution and other compensation in cases of traffickers’ conviction. The government did not report using these provisions during the reporting period. Foreign victims had the same access to care as domestic victims, and the government could assist foreign victims seeking repatriation. The Act was amended in 2021.

There was only one reference to legislation in St. Lucia during the reporting period. In this instance, the government granted citizenship to a Sri Lankan trafficking victim and began processing a citizenship application from another Sri Lankan trafficking victim who held refugee status; the case remained pending at the end of the reporting period.

The 2010 Counter-Trafficking Act criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of up to five years’ imprisonment or fines up to 100,000 Eastern Caribbean dollars (XCD) (USD\$37,040) for offenses involving an adult victim; the maximum imprisonment penalty increased to 10 years’ imprisonment for those involving a child victim.

### Highlights from TIP Reports

- 2021: The government conducted one trafficking investigation under the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act during the reporting period, compared with none in 2020 and three in 2019. The case involved two Saint Lucian children taken to France; the government requested France’s cooperation with the investigation, which remained ongoing at the end of the reporting period.
- 2022: The government conducted four sex trafficking investigations, compared with one trafficking investigation in 2021, none in 2020, and three in 2019. The government initiated one sex trafficking prosecution under the anti-trafficking law, the first prosecution since 2015. The Magistrate held a hearing on the case in February 2023 and the matter was advanced to the High Court; the suspect was on bail awaiting trial at the end of the reporting period. The government has never convicted a trafficker. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in human trafficking crimes.



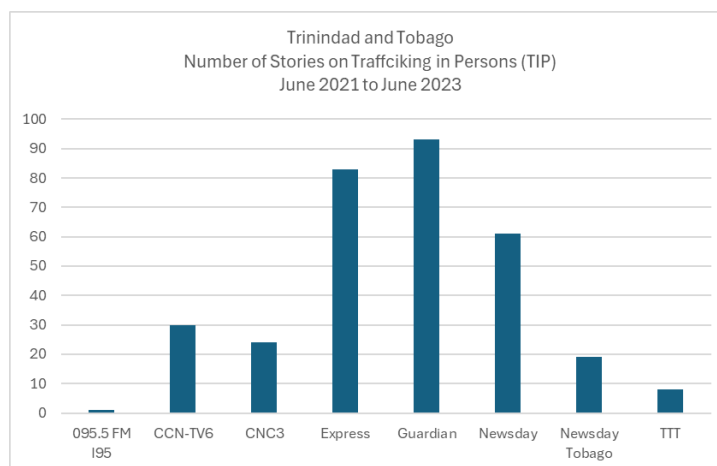
## Trinidad and Tobago

**Trinidad and Tobago** has enacted laws to address human trafficking. The Trafficking in Persons Act was enacted in 2011 to criminalize trafficking and prescribe penalties for offenders. The Trafficking in Persons Act of 2011 criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of no less than 15 years' imprisonment and a fine of no less than 500,000 Trinidad and Tobago dollars (TTD) (USD\$74,650) for offenses involving an adult victim, and no less than 20 years' imprisonment and a fine of no less than 1 million TTD (USD\$149,300) for those involving a child victim.

The government has taken steps to address human trafficking, including the establishment of the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) within the Ministry of National Security. The CTU is responsible for coordinating anti-trafficking efforts. Trinidad and Tobago collaborates with international organizations, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), to strengthen its capacity to combat human trafficking. These entities are credible sources of information but the interviews with journalists in Trinidad and Tobago indicated that they do not actively engage or source information from all of them. The exception was the CTU, however, they were contacted only if there was a current news story about TIP victims or activity or if a press release from CTU was issued.

### Highlights from TIP Reports

- 2021: The government identified 80 trafficking victims; 46 were exploited in sex trafficking, two were exploited in labor trafficking, and 32 were for unspecified exploitation. This compares with six identified trafficking victims in 2020 and 34 in 2019. All 46 sex trafficking victims were Venezuelan, including 21 women and 25 girls. The labor trafficking victims were both Indian men. Reports suggested some unidentified victims feared retaliation from authorities, including during police raids, trials, and interdiction operations involving Venezuelan migrants. The CTU was the primary entity responsible for identifying victims, and it used existing screening protocols. Authorities provided some assistance to 54 victims, compared with 70 potential victims in 2020.
- 2022: The CTU investigated 22 new cases under the TIP Act in 2022, including 20 cases of sex trafficking and two cases of labor trafficking, compared with 23 new trafficking cases in 2021 (nine for sex trafficking, five for labor trafficking, and nine for unspecified trafficking-related crimes). The government continued investigation of 26 cases (23 for sex trafficking and three for labor trafficking) from prior reporting periods. The government reported one labor trafficking case involved a male Venezuelan victim for the first time. The media also reported police arrested 12 men during a February 2022 law enforcement action. The government initiated prosecution of five suspected sex traffickers, including two police officers, compared with 15 suspected sex traffickers, including three police officers, in 2021 and two alleged sex traffickers in 2020. Of these, the government prosecuted four defendants under the TIP Act and one under other laws for indecent assault and sexual offenses.



In examining the four countries in this study, it is important to note that MIC was able to employ the region’s only media monitoring service, Media InSite, operating out of Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. This was helpful as we had access to all newspaper articles for both countries, as well as some television and radio.

In the case of Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Lucia, the research was based on online searches and in-person visits to media entities in these countries for the viewing and analyzing of publication archives.

**Limitations:**

1. Limited data as there is a lack of media monitoring in two of the countries – Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Lucia. Physical searches of records at media entities had to be done for these two countries and none of the media houses kept catalogued records.
2. There was more extensive feedback and access to media reports in Trinidad and Tobago as well as Barbados due to the fact that the media ecosystems there are more developed. Trinidad and Tobago is also ahead of Barbados with regards to the level of reporting and journalistic perspectives. This is evidenced in the stories reviewed for this research.
3. The data gathered did not capture and could not capture the topic as discussed on radio or on radio talk shows. This is important since radio is one of the most influential and pervasive forms of media in the Caribbean as evidenced in local surveys and media ecosystem assessments. These have been done by in-house media entities as well as media research companies such as Market Facts and Opinions. Extensive information ecosystem assessments have also been done by Internews on Barbados.
4. A review of the social media platforms where TIP stories were aired, showed a lack of replication of the stories in their social communities. The stories would have appeared in the digital copies of newspapers and / or the television news. However, reposting of these stories to social media was not a common occurrence.



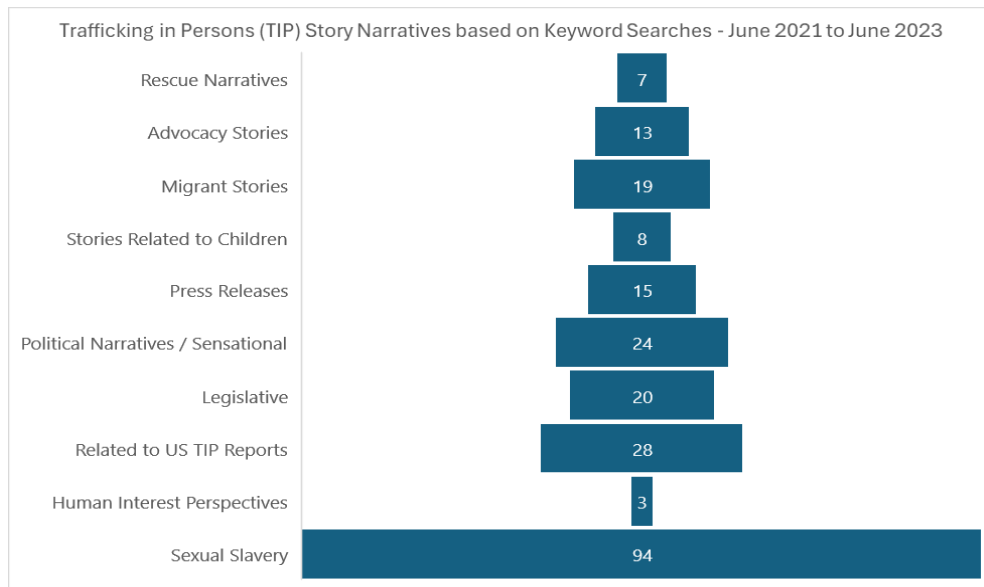
## 6.3 Key Findings

**Frame and Perspective.** These are important because this defines the shape of how a story is presented to the audience and can influence the way the information is perceived. The key question on the analysis was: How does the media typically frame stories related to human trafficking?

The media’s framing of stories related to human trafficking can vary, but there are some common themes and patterns that tend to emerge.

Many of the stories were regurgitated information as news reports on Trafficking In Persons reports, initiatives by the government and stakeholders, inclusive of counter trafficking units, and republication of press releases. Some of these were also linked to larger global issues and reports and moved the focus away from the local context.

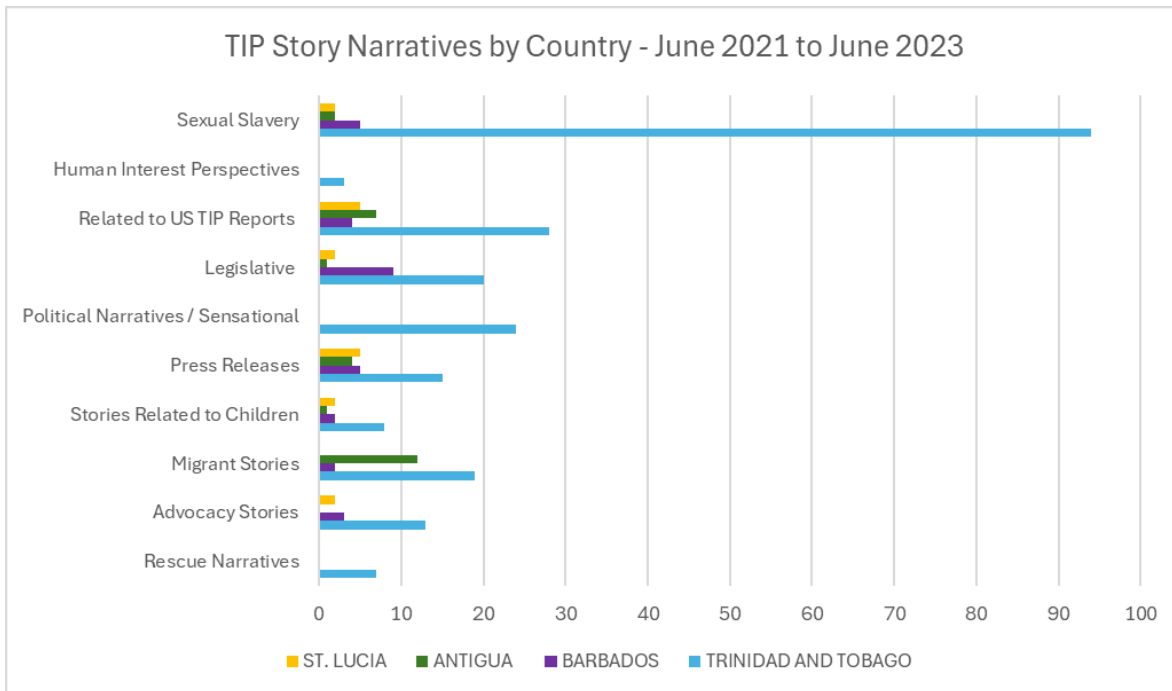
Following a careful review of all the stories, categories were developed to better analyze the frame and perspectives presented. The table below shows the distribution of the types of story angles based on the core topic or area of interest of each story analyzed:





STORY NARRATIVE	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	BARBADOS	ANTIGUA & BARBUDA	SAINT LUCIA
Rescue Narratives	7	0	0	0
Advocacy Stories	13	3	0	2
Migrant Stories	19	2	12	0
Victimization Narratives	18	0	0	0
Stories Related to Children	8	2	1	2
Press Releases	15	5	4	5
Political Narratives/Sensational	24	0	0	0
Legislative	20	9	1	2
Related to US TIP Reports	28	4	7	5
Human Interest Perspectives	3	0	0	0
Sexual Slavery/Sexual Labour	94	5	2	2

Table 14 – Story narratives based on angles covered by media in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago for the period June 2021 to June 2023. The detailed logs are in this report as [Appendix 6](#)




Apart from the above, there were some other angles, and these are noteworthy and illustrated below as screenshots.

It is also common that some media houses pick up reports on TIP as regional stories and republish them in an effort to show the commonality of the issue from a regional perspective and to also report on the precedents within the region. Trinidad Express has done this more than the other newspapers and it may be based on the content exchange agreement they have with RJR Gleaner group in Jamaica which owns 5% of the shares in One Caribbean Media, the parent company of the Trinidad Express. Therefore, some regional stories may be replicated in these countries.

The TIP Reports garner noteworthy coverage. All journalists interviewed saw this as the benchmark by which governments could be held accountable and relayed that this is why it is given prominence. When asked why there was not a closer examination of the reasons behind the Tiers or why was not more coverage was not given to how to improve, the reasons included are stated below:

- *“Those angles were not considered.”* (This was the popular response. More than fifty percent of journalists made this comment)
- *“Limited number of journalists to do this as it takes a lot of time.”*
- *“Editor said it was not necessary.”*



**COVID-19 update: 193 new cases from 568 tests**

BARBADOS recorded 193 new COVID-19 cases, 79 males and 114 females, from 568 tests conducted on Monday, July 26, by the Barbados Public Health Laboratory.

The positive cases comprised 101 persons under the age of 35, and 167 who were 35 years and older.

The number of people in isolation facilities was 48, while 1,056 were in home quarantine.

As of July 26, there were 494 COVID-19 related deaths.

The public health laboratory was conducting 722,003 tests since February 2020, and recorded 16,060 COVID-19 cases (43,060 males and 49,053 females).

Under the National Vaccination Programme for COVID-19, the total number of persons vaccinated has been at least one dose in 102,899 (71.3 per cent of the eligible population). The eligible population represents those persons who are 12 years and older.



**AG makes statement on B'dos upgrade to tier 2 in US' TIP report**

THE Government of Barbados is heartened to learn that Barbados has been upgraded to Tier 2 in the US Department of State 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report.


This upgrade represents significant work on the part of the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons and I wish to congratulate them for their perseverance and commitment to the task at hand. We are determined to prevent the heinous crime of Trafficking in Persons getting a solid foothold in Barbados. I also wish to thank all those who have partnered with us, particularly on our public education and sensitisation programme.

This upgrade cannot be taken for granted and the Task Force and Government will not rest on our laurels. There is still a great deal of work to be done to ensure that Barbados is able to identify and appropriately support vulnerable persons and victims, as well as ensure that perpetrators feel the full force of the law. These are not tasks that can be accomplished overnight, but with the help of the Barbadian public we will succeed. Again, I urge Barbadians, if you see something, say something. Trafficking in Persons is a vicious crime, an attack on a person's human rights that must not be allowed to flourish in this country.

Barbados was upgraded to Tier 2 in the 2022 US Department Trafficking in Persons Report from the Tier 2 Watch List, where it was placed in 2021.


Barbados Advocate, July 26<sup>th</sup> 2022


Trinidad Newsday, July 27<sup>th</sup> 2022



**Country making progress in combatting human trafficking, but still more work to do - report**

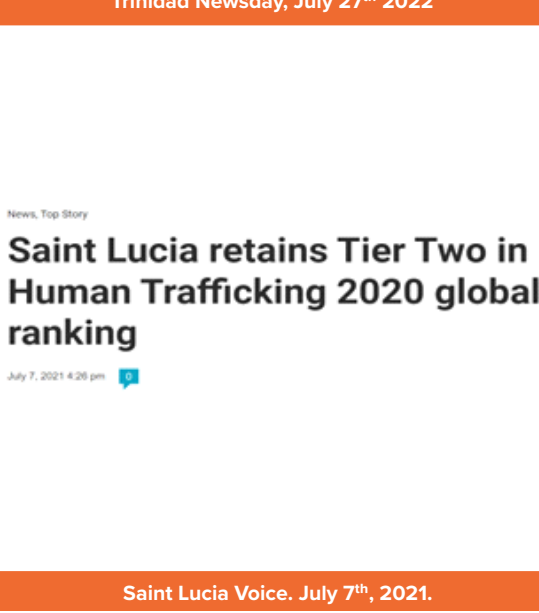
21 June 2023





The government failed in several key areas such as not starting any prosecutions for the third consecutive year (Photo courtesy: youth4justice.org)

Antigua Observer, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2023



**Saint Lucia retains Tier Two in Human Trafficking 2020 global ranking**

News, Top Story

July 7, 2021 4:26 pm

Saint Lucia Voice, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021.



There were instances of what can be deemed to be “Light Sensationalism” where some of the stories contained dramatic elements. The positive is that it may capture attention, but the negative is that it tends to drown out the public’s understanding of the broader issue. Light sensationalism is presenting news stories in a way that also emphasizes what can be deemed to be”entertaining” aspects of the stories at the expense of accuracy, depth, or seriousness. This approach often involves catchy headlines, or the focusing on trivial aspects of a story to attract viewers or readers.

Unlike full-blown sensationalism, which can heavily distort the truth or present fabricated information, light sensationalism may still provide factual content but with a presentation style aimed at maximizing engagement and entertainment value. This can lead to a skewed perception of news events, prioritize entertainment over information, and potentially undermine public trust in the media.



Barbados Today ( Barbados), 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021



Barbados Today, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022

In one interview, a journalist recounted her experience with a victim of human trafficking and the issue of stigmatization and victim-blaming was raised. The journalist said that in the case of the Venezuelan migrant who was trafficked, she was afraid to seek help based on the fear of being shunned in Trinidad as there have been sentiments of animosity against Venezuelans. Society's misconceptions about trafficking victims can contribute to their marginalization and inhibit their ability to access support services or engage with the media.

In Antigua and Barbuda, an expert in TIP who works with the counter-trafficking unit in Antigua, shared the observation that “media coverage is not usually balanced and there have been many instances where human trafficking is used interchangeably with migrant smuggling because it may sound more exciting.” Media coverage in Antigua and Barbuda tends to focus on the problem, often making it appear bigger than it really is. There are instances where media coverage of human trafficking may contain false information or contribute to misconceptions as a result of lack of understanding, and unverified sources.

Media coverage in Antigua and Barbuda has frequently criticized or downplayed the efforts made by law enforcement to combat human trafficking. The efforts of people working to identify, screen, and protect victims are usually overlooked.

Trafficking in Persons was highly **politicized** in Trinidad and Tobago and over a three-week period there were several sensational reports (eleven reports) in the media which detracted from the issue itself. The central story revolved around an allegation made by a former government minister that he knew of politicians who were involved in human trafficking. The media carried a series of reports of responses from several politicians on the allegation. During this period there was no attempt by any media house to do a deep dive into the accusation. The media consistently carried the barrage of comments by opposition and ruling party. The perspectives where stories presented coverage of victims, showcased them as vulnerable and these can be characterized as Victimization Narratives. The downside of such stories is that it can sometimes oversimplify the complexities of the victims' experiences.

**Dilution of the causes and solutions** in TIP stories is evident in this story from the Barbados Nation, 6<sup>th</sup> August 2021, titled “Call for more protection for sex workers.” ([Appendix 7](#)). The headline is also an attention-grabber and considered to be sensational. The story itself became diluted and dealt more with overall efforts and lost the focus on the victims' circumstances.

Human Interest Narratives and the stories of victimization were rare. Yet the very few which were examined were impactful in that it showed the depth of the issue in an emotional manner which made for unique and appealing content.

**Human interest journalism** plays a significant role in reporting on human trafficking stories for several reasons including raising awareness where the stories focus on the personal aspects of news, making complex issues like human trafficking more relatable and understandable to the general public. By highlighting individual experiences, these stories can raise awareness about the severity and intricacies of human trafficking, a crime that often remains hidden in plain sight.



The establishment of an emotional connection between the subject and the audience is also effective. By showcasing the human side of the victims or survivors, journalists can evoke empathy and compassion in readers and viewers, which can motivate them to take action, support anti-trafficking efforts, or change their perceptions and behaviors related to human trafficking.

# Human trafficking in T&T -A tale of deceit

HELEN DRAFTON

I nterested to continue the series on "positive pathways" featuring the Ministry of Education's critical initiatives in falling and at-risk schools but side-tracked to the matter of human trafficking and the US Department of State 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report.

We should be thankful to the US Government for making such reports available and in a timely manner, and to the US Ambassador Candace Bond, for her candid media responses. We should also appreciate the Ambassador's clarification of the term "government officials," used in the report, as "persons accountable to the people and elected officials."

Elected officials on government and opposition benches are all members of the governance structure under the democratic Constitution. Healthy democratic systems are inherently competitive, which ought to drive effectiveness and success, and not ugly divisions, which is a function of power-hat that causes behaviors inimical to the public interest.

Given our history and how most of

our ancestors came here, there should be high sensitivity to human trafficking, a heinous crime against humanity. Traffickers abduct children and adults for the business of sex, labour, and their organs, which include murder, reducing victims to a commodity, and stripping them of human rights and their dignity. There's a distinct difference with prostitution, in which case people offer themselves for money or something of value, usually driven by dire social and economic circumstances.

The web is littered with research that shows most prostitutes want to escape the trade because of shocking abuse, devastating health problems such as hepatitis B, cervical cancer, fertility complications, and psychological trauma. So those government officials who turned a blind eye and those advocating legalising prostitution ignore the equally dehumanising realities. Organised prostitution provides a targeted supply pool for criminals to prey on prostitutes, significantly fueling human trafficking. Prostitution creates safe havens for criminals who traffic sex workers into forced

prostitution.

Some countries ensure that prostitutes have access to regular health checks and medications. One research report states, "The Swedish Government has found that much of the vast profit generated by the global prostitution industry goes into the pockets of human traffickers." "International trafficking in human beings could not flourish but for the existence of local prostitution markets where men are willing and able to buy and sell women and children for sexual exploitation." (Source: website, US Department of State Archive).

The past and present government officials declaring what they know about colleagues' complicity in human trafficking probably didn't think some could deem their revelations self-serving. Why now, when it's too late to help victims? If their stories are true, when they learned about the trade, they should have condemned the victims' sufferings as cruel and unactionable and made a police report. Did they tell the Minister of National Security or the Attorney General or mention the matter in Cabinet? They

have, seemingly, corroborated the allegations in the US report. Suppose they had made reports and the police had done nothing. What should the police expect from citizens they often urge to report suspicious activities and crimes? Why should citizens have confidence in the police and these officials?

The new Commissioner of Police (CoP) Mrs Eda Harwood-Christopher has committed to investigating the allegations. She faces challenges that are difficult to resolve in the near future. While many would want her to succeed, the chances of prosecution and conviction of anyone are unlikely.

There are unimpressive observations in the reports. Some aren't surprising. "A study funded by a foreign organisation and conducted by a foreign company reported that ten per cent of the police force was under active investigation for misconduct, including trafficking." That is approximately 650 officers. The CoP will know the extent, and one imagines who these officers are.

Continues on page 14

Trinidad Guardian, 5th March 2023

TOBAGO NEWS

NEWSDAY TUESDAY MARCH 8, 2022

# Tricked into prostitution

What human trafficking looks like in TT

LAUREL V WILLIAMS

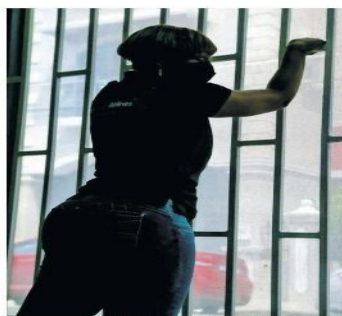
Lured by the promise of work and an opportunity to earn US currency, Lucia\* left her home in Venezuela for TT and claimed she was tricked into prostitution.

The victims of human trafficking victims said she managed to escape her captors. Later she then responded to advertisements in newspapers in Caracas and on social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp groups offering jobs in TT.

The unsuspecting victim recalled that she called the phone number, gave them her personal information such as her name, age, address, and the type of job she would be interested in.

"They even asked for her parents' names and address. It is likely these people (traffickers) stated to verify her information," according to a close friend of Lucia.

Eager for an escape to better her life, the young woman in her 20s was told to go to a specific bus station in Caracas. On arrival, a man and woman said her ticket fare and ensured she sat on the bus for the 14-hour trip to Trinidad, one of the closest states to TT.



Human trafficking involves sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, and because of the COVID-19 pandemic...

Coastal Trafficking Unit (CTU) director Alana Wheeler for more detailed information on human trafficking in TT.

"Of Trinidad's 12 years working in the field of national security, mine have been in anti-human trafficking efforts in that country. Via e-mail, she said that historically, brothels existed in the south and south-western Trinidad, Port of Spain, central, south-eastern Trinidad and scattered parts of northern Trinidad.

Managers of brothels in the south and central Trinidad have been charged for human trafficking by the CTU. The area also has different types of trafficking - domestic servitude, forced labour, and sexual exploitation.

She added that the human trafficking industry is not limited to brothels. She identified other industries such as roadside vendors, gas stations, domestic houses, guest houses, modelling agencies, massage parlours, the sport industry, restaurants and the gaming machine industry.

From 2018, the unit has seen an increase in the referral and identification of underrecognised and separated migrant minors as well as adult female

highest percentage (87) for sexual exploitation, followed by Colombia at 27 per cent then the Dominican Republic at 0.8 per cent.

In terms of forced labour and domestic servitude, Guyana accounts for four per cent and Bolivia, 0.8 per cent.

**An ex-MP's fight to stop brothels**

Former Deputy North MP Rosanna Karahal believes that human trafficking and prostitution got worse over the years due to the influx of migrants.

She charged that authorities, including the judicial system, have become less proactive in dealing with the issue. She said, "I urge ministers in all areas of the executive branch" have expanded over the past few years.

"For that reason, the ex-UNEP MP believes prostitution is hard to fight.

As the MP, she managed to get a brothel shut down for about six months after years of trying to do so. She, together with constituents, slipped to the owners' having their bar license renewed by a consultant in the Champagne strip region.

Many bars and guest houses operate late hours, establishing an cover-age

Newsday Tobago (Trinidad and Tobago), 8th March 2022

Many media reports focused on the **Criminalization of Traffickers and the Legal perspectives**, referencing legislation, law enforcement and interventions. However, they missed the deeper layers of causes, prevention, and recommendations for improvements in detection.

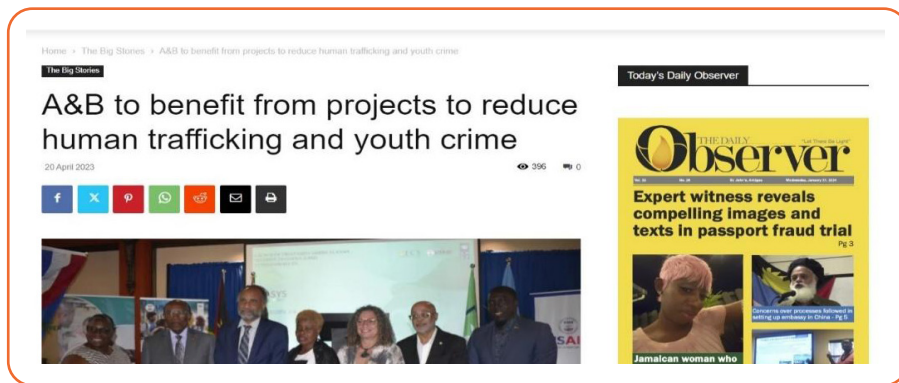
A veteran journalist and former President of BARJAM (Barbados Association of Journalists and Media Workers), noted that while the government's anti-trafficking campaign is published and broadcast, reporters rarely investigate the information.

He said, “trafficking in persons in Barbados is not that of a big deal at the moment in terms of numbers, or knowing the numbers, it is not something that is centered on the mind of most journalists, because there’s not a lot of incidents that come to our attention.” When asked about the collaboration with NGOs or government entities he stated that “generally speaking, there is not a lot of collaboration.”

In discussing the needs, he highlighted the importance of credible sources in investigative journalism, emphasizing the role of established organizations like the police and NGOs. He also stressed the need for fact-checking and verification when gathering information from social media or other sources, to ensure accuracy and credibility in reporting.



The Barbados Advocate, 30<sup>th</sup> July 2022



Antigua Observer, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023



Many stories could be categorized as reflecting Gender Stereotypes where the media often highlighted gender-specific aspects of human trafficking, focusing on women and girls as victims of sexual exploitation. Based on the analysis of media reports for this study where gender was the topic, there were only two stories which referenced boys as victims of human trafficking. All others made reference to females, women or girls. 98% of stories referenced female and 2% referenced male. This can result in a public perception which overshadows the fact that boys have also been trafficked or can be victims.



Barbados Today, 7th March 2022



Newsday, Trinidad and Tobago, 31st December 2021

There were few stories which depicted rescues as these can only be told based on actual events.

Rescue Narratives are human trafficking stories which include narratives of dramatic rescues by law enforcement or non-governmental organizations. These stories can be powerful but can also be sensational and may not provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by survivors after rescue.



## 10 Latin females rescued at brothel still in custody

ANNA-LISA PAUL

Ten female Latin Americas who were rescued on Tuesday from a brothel in Montrose, Chaguanas, remained in police custody yesterday.

The group, which included two teenagers, 17 and 18, were said to be cooperating with officers of the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU).

They were reportedly interviewed about the property from which they had been removed, as well as the activities they were allegedly forced to do there and the clients who would have accessed their services.

It was still unknown where the victims, whose ages ranged from 17 to 38, were being kept up to last night.

The special operation between 5 am and 2 pm on Tuesday, was conducted by officers of the Counter-Trafficking Unit (CTU), the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and the Special Investigations Task Force, along with operational support from the Multi Operational Police Section and Inter-Agency Task Force.

The officers raided the compound, which boasts a private home, several apartments, a shop and a small food establishment, as they searched for the women, who were allegedly being forced to work as prostitutes.

During the exercise, six Trinidadian men, a Trinidadian woman, a Latin American man and a Jamaican woman were also arrested.

Numerous efforts yesterday to ascertain if charges were laid against anyone were unsuccessful, as calls to CTU officials went unanswered.

Meanwhile, in an effort to strengthen cooperation between the Ministry of National Security's Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) and the Ministry of Finance's Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (FIUTT), the two entities yesterday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enable the sharing of information and intelligence for the purpose of investigating matters related to Trafficking in Persons (TIPs), money laundering, terrorist financing, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other related criminal matters.

Trinidad Guardian, 19th October 2022

NEWS

NEWSDAY SECTION A FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2023 PAGE 19

## Regional task force rescues trafficked children in TT

JENSEN LA VENDE

Trinidad and Tobago was one of the Caribbean and Latin American countries where nine minors were rescued from human trafficking by a joint task force in an operation that took place over five days at the end of May.

The joint exercise was conducted by the Caribbean Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (Impacs), and the Central American

operation, funded by Spain through a joint fund for Caribbean-Spain Specific and Technical Co-operation, saw the arrest of 170 people.

The operation also saw officials rescuing over 60 victims of human trafficking and over 400 migrants in vulnerable situations.

"Nine minors were reported among the rescued victims, one as young as nine months old.

"The rescued minors were taken from

predominantly female, about 25 years and mainly from Latin American countries, but also included Chinese and Jamaican nationals and one national from Guinea, Africa."

The release did not identify how many of the victims were rescued from TT or how many traffickers were held in the country.

In April, National Security Minister Fitzgerald Hind's said former director of international affairs, at

the ministry Antoinette Lucas-Andrews was contracted for six months to address this country's prosecution of human traffickers.

Lucas-Andrews was hired through the US and is expected to review and assess the recommendations of the US State Department TIPS report and advise the government on steps to improve its efforts to combat human trafficking.

The 2022 US State

Department Trafficking in Persons report said the government did not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The report said the government never convicted a trafficker under its 2011 anti-trafficking law.

It added that there was corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes as well as a failure by the state to act on senior

government officials allegedly involved in human trafficking.

The report said the country remained on Tier 2 Watch List for the second consecutive year.

Police, immigration, customs and Coast Guard officers were accused of being part of the human trafficking network in TT.

The Impacs statement said the Bahamas reported the largest number of victims rescued of all

states.

The Bahamas was host to the Heads of Government conference in early June which saw the US pledging US\$100 million to tackle crime and climate change.

Those rescued there were identified after law enforcement monitored an apartment complex and a nightclub.

Most of the victims were either from Colombia or Venezuela, a few from Jamaica and one Panamanian.

Newsday, Trinidad and Tobago, 16th June 2023

The stories did not make the linkages to social ills which create to the complexities and issues of human trafficking. Links to other matters which can be considered which contribute to factors to trafficking in persons, including poverty, money laundering, and other factors.<sup>24</sup> This may be due to a lack of understanding of the social environment and contributing factors, as well as a lack of critical thinking on the part of some journalists due to insufficient training or resources to dig deeper.

### Other Narrative Approaches:

In Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia and Barbados, many stories focused on:

- Press Releases from governmental and related entities on TIP, including of the US Department of State Human Trafficking Report. As much as 34% (35 stories) collectively from these countries, were developed based on press releases.
- News Reports on TIP where arrests have been made.

24 United Nations Policy on Drugs and Crime, E4J University Module Series: Trafficking in Persons & Smuggling of Migrants, [Module 7: Prevention of Trafficking in Persons](#)



As seen in Table 14 there are very few stories on the human-interest aspect of the issue and there is almost no investigative reporting or interviews with experts.

In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, data and a library of stories was accessible as there was an in-country media monitoring service (Media Insite). Coverage of TIP in Trinidad and Tobago as a percentage of all news stories is 0.2% between June 2021 and June 2023 which is a total of 319 stories over the two-year period.

In Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Lucia, the stories are typically presented as isolated incidents, and there is very little effort to connect them to broader social issues. The victims are mainly female, and the perpetrators or traffickers are mainly male. There is no attempt at background research or investigative pieces on how the trafficking matter arose and the extent of trafficking within the wider context of crime, signed conventions, and other related macro-environment perspectives.

The media's portrayal of the victims often displays empathy but does not go into any detail or attempt to pull back the layers of the story to review their journey, emotional considerations, and other sensitivities. The perpetrators of human trafficking are addressed based on police reports and, again, there is a lack of deep dives to connect them to possible organized crime, investigate their backgrounds or examine their history.

The material reviewed did not indicate instances of sensationalism. This is perhaps because there was a high dependence on strict law-based police reports. There were a few attempts at incorporating sensitivity and awareness in the public's interest. These stories often involved interviews or comments from representatives of the counter-trafficking units in the countries under review.

In the analysis, the research showed that there were very few examples of the exploitation of sensitive content as in the case of children in the excerpt of the online publication in the Caribbean Alert, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022.

There was an adherence to ethical policies and guidelines with special attention being paid to stories involving children. Based on discussions with newsrooms, there are no documented internal media house policies, however guidance is taken from legislation such as in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, the Sexual Offences Act 2019 and the Children Act 2012. Minors are protected in reporting. The Children's Protection Act in Trinidad and Tobago and attention to the [UN Convention on the Rights of Children are often employed.](#)

## Antigua and Barbuda

Thirty (30) stories appeared for the monitoring period and most of these were online. There are ten (10) media entities represented as follows:

MEDIA HOUSE	NUMBER OF STORIES
Abs television	1
Antigua Breaking News	1
Antigua Newsroom	1
Antigua Observer	16
Antigua News	1
Chamnge.org	1
Island Press Box	1
Loop News	5
Real News	2
Twin Island Media	1

**Table 15 – Media coverage on Trafficking in Persons from Antigua and Barbuda for the period June 2021 to June 2023**



## Barbados

There were forty-four (44) stories collected and reviewed for Barbados were from nine (9) media outlets and included:

MEDIA HOUSE	NUMBER OF STORIES
099.3 FM Capital HD Radio	1
92.9 FM VOB	2
Barbados Business Authority	2
Barbados Nation	11
Barbados Today	14
CBC-TV	3
The Barbados Advocate	11

**Table 16 – Media coverage on Trafficking in Persons from Barbados for the period June 2021 to June 2023**

In an interview with Dr. Olivia Smith, a distinguished scholar at McGill University’s Max Bell School of Public Policy, is a renowned expert in labor migration and human trafficking who is dedicated to advancing human rights and combating human trafficking. Based on her experiences and observations of the media this was her response to the question of how the media typically frame stories related to human trafficking:

*“Normally, they typically frame around certain aspects because it’s very sensitive, sensational lives. And it is always, often about sex trafficking and women. So that’s the phrase people get to know about trafficking. But there are other dimensions. And occasionally we’ll see the labor trafficking story. But the media doesn’t pay much attention, like in the follow up for a labor trafficking issue as to the sex trafficking and one of the things that happened is that often there the conflation of trafficking, sex trafficking, and prostitution, and they’re different things. And so there’s never the tendency to look at the root causes. And I think that looking at the root causes are very, very important.... The root causes that I believe the media should look at and have some discussion on includes on why are they (victims of TIP) in this vulnerable position of exploitation? ... look at the backstory of how did you get here? Why did you get here? What brought you here? More often than not, those questions are not asked by the media. And there are questions that need to be explored.”*

The research on Barbados and the other countries, reflected Dr. Smith’s comments. For the period under review and based on the data collection done, there were forty-four (44) media reports covering Trafficking in Persons. Most of these stemmed from regional or international reports.

## Saint Lucia

Researchers were able to review seventeen (17) stories based on what could be acquired or accessed. The review included print, online publications, television and radio news reports. Stories examined represented seven (7) media outlets / media entities:

MEDIA HOUSE	NUMBER OF STORIES
Humanium	1
Loop News	2
St. Lucia Government Gazette	1
St. Lucia News Now	2
St. Lucia Times	1
The St. Lucia Mirror	2
The Voice	8

**Table 17 – Media coverage on Trafficking in Persons from Saint Lucia for the period June 2021 to June 2023**

## Trinidad and Tobago

In Trinidad and Tobago, the researchers were able to derive the percentage of media coverage on trafficking in persons compared to all other stories because the media research site Media InSite scrapes and amalgamates stories from all media entities in Trinidad. Data scraped and amalgamated for this project covered a 2-year duration – from June 2021-June 2023 showed the total number of stories across all media entities was approximately 78,600. In those two years, the number of stories found under the search term “trafficking in persons” stands at 319. If this number is halved, to approximate stories for one year, it will stand at 159. This means that there is 0.2% of media coverage on trafficking in persons compared to other stories in Trinidad and Tobago.

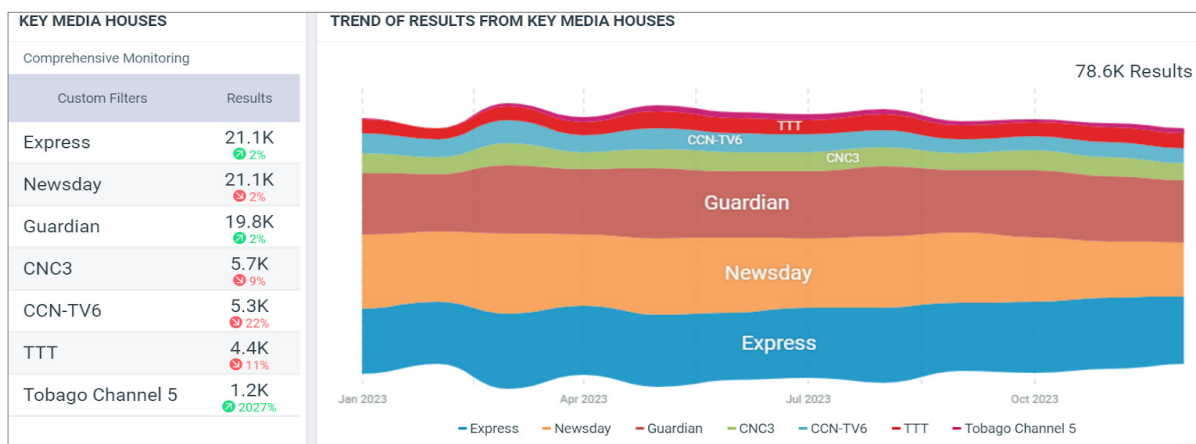


Image 1: Total Stories for 2023. Source: Media InSite

Three hundred and nineteen (319) stories were published or broadcast over the specified period. These were sourced from eight media houses as listed below:

MEDIA HOUSE	NUMBER OF STORIES
095.5 FM I95	1
CCN-TV6	30
CNC3	24
Express	83
Guardian	93
Newsday	61
Newsday Tobago	19
TTT	8

Table 18 – Media coverage on Trafficking in Persons from Trinidad and Tobago for the period June 2021 to June 2023

Following a comprehensive review of all the stories collected for analysis, a series of keywords were developed as a criteria for which most of the media reports could be categorized and compared.

TRINIDAD KEYWORD SEARCH	RESULTS
Trafficking in persons	319
Trafficked	174
Sexual slavery	27
Sexual labour	70

**Table 19 - Keyword search results for media coverage of TIP stories in for the period June 2021 to June 2023**

	CCN TV6	CNC3	TTT	95.1FM	Express	Guardian	Newsday
<b>TIP</b>	30	24	8	1	83	93	79
Trafficked	6	13	5	1	42	60	46
Sexual slavery	2	4	0	0	6	9	8
Sexual labour	0	1	1	0	12	19	32

**Table 20 – Keyword results of media coverage of TIP stories in Trinidad and Tobago for the period June 2021 to June 2023 when cross-referenced by media house and research term**

A comprehensive review of all stories evidenced that there was a severe lack of investigative reporting. Of the 419 stories reviewed, there were only five from Trinidad and Tobago where there was an effort to deep dive. These were the stories which were also human interest or migrant stories.



## Sourcing and Verification:

Journalists depend on general police sources, counter trafficking units of the police services and attorney general offices to verify information when reporting on human trafficking cases. These are seen to be credible. With regards to the trafficking in persons reports, the journalists interact with the US Embassies in their countries. There was little interaction with the International Office for Migration (IOM) or United Nations High Commission for Refugees who have TIP programs and initiatives.

Challenges or limitations in obtaining accurate information on human trafficking incidents include access to updated data and statistics; a lack of open sources of information; and the general absence of dedicated points of contact or authoritative sources at relevant authorities.

A senior editor at a well-known media house explained that like most media houses in Trinidad and Tobago is under resourced in terms of staff as well as financially. If there is a lack of staff to cover daily beats, in-depth reporting suffers.

There are also no security measures in place for journalists covering trafficking in persons from police. However, few media houses appear willing to systematically protect their journalists as and when needed. There have been instances where reporters cancelled stories due to risk or uncertainty. There was one incident of a photojournalist being violently chased from a scene by police officers where they were photographing a TIP operation. The photojournalist escaped and the media house had arrangements in place for security and a safe return. They have not been discovered and their name cannot be revealed.

Verifying information in human trafficking cases is crucial for journalists to ensure accuracy and ethical reporting. Human trafficking is a complex and hidden crime, making it challenging to gather reliable information.

Less than fifty percent of journalists said that they are cross-checking sources by relying on multiple sources to corroborate information. Journalists do, however, review official documents and reports from law enforcement agencies, government authorities, and stakeholders such as the diplomatic corps. There were very few interviews with different stakeholders, government representatives and non-governmental actors.

There was almost no data analysis and desk research and very rarely did reporting include the use of statistics. While it is true that there is a lack of data generally, desk research or consultations with experts and civil society actors could be used as references. This would include experts from academia, and non-governmental agencies (NGOs) who deal with human trafficking, and who can provide additional context to help contextualize and verify the accuracy of the stories.

Based on the examination of all stories, there was only one story which went viral.

From the material reviewed it seemed that journalists abide by ethical standards and in most cases they gave consideration to the sensitivities of the victims. They did not take photos of them which were identifiable. The images were unrecognizable or silhouette shots; and they refrained from being too descriptive.



Coming out of discussions with stakeholders in all four countries and noting their comments and comparing it to the stories analyzed, it can be difficult for the media to balance the need for public awareness with the potential for sensationalizing or misrepresenting the issue. It requires that journalists practice accuracy with fact checking and employ responsible reporting techniques such as cross-verification of information. There are no standard ethical guidelines or codes of conduct in the current environment. There is a risk of poor journalistic practice which can have recurrent damaging effects on those featured in the story. The faces of children and victims should be blurred. The photograph below, for example, can result in a lifelong stigma.



Online Publication of The Caribbean Alert, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022

The most accessible and comprehensive data available came from Trinidad and Tobago and as noted below explains why the quality of reporting is much higher than in the other countries in this report.

The table below is taken from a report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) titled, “An Analysis of the Victim Care Environment to Support Survivors of Human Trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago”. The Counter-Trafficking Unit is credited as the original source.

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

**Table 21 - Trafficking in Persons Data.**

Source: Counter-Trafficking Unit, Trinidad and Tobago



If we compare this data with the table below of Total Crime by Offence in 2021, we can deduce the percentage of trafficking in persons of all crime for that year.

OFFENCE	2020	2021
Fraud Offences	168	414
Woundings and Shootings	401	610
Robberies	1826	1643
Burglaries and Breakings	1511	1331
Larceny Motor Vehicles	477	370
Larceny Dwelling House	134	136
Serious Indecency	14	16
Kidnapping for Ransom	1	1
Narcotics	269	262
Murders	393	448
Kidnapping	65	66
Other	609	636
Rapes, Incest and Sexual Offences	372	366
General Larceny	1283	1500
Possession of Firearms and Ammunition	813	750
	Sum = 8336	Sum = 8549

**Table 22 - Total Crime by Offence Comparative Report 2020/2021 Source: Trinidad and Tobago Police Service**

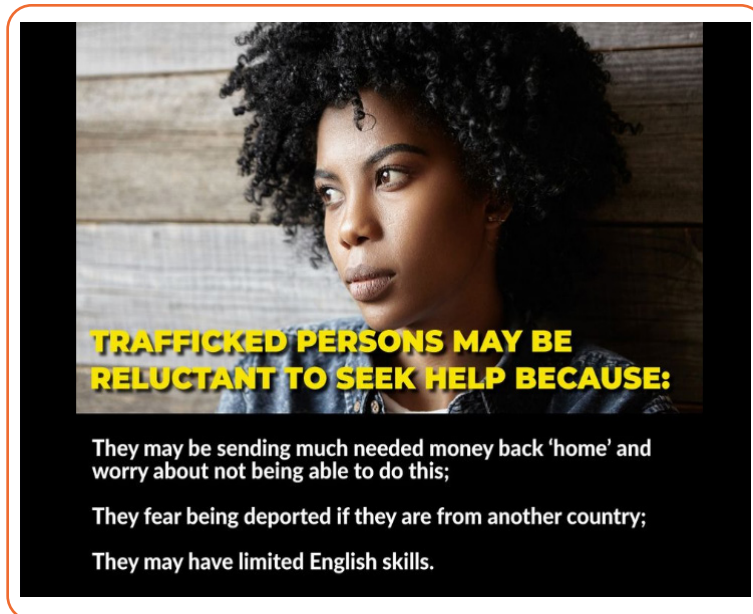
According to the IOM report, there were 79 reports of Trafficking in Persons in 2020. The total crimes reported that year were 8336. If we add 79 to that, the total number of crimes is 8415. This calculation deduces that Trafficking in Persons made up 0.93% of total crime in 2020.

There was no focus on the role of the media as a provider of critical information to educate the public about the broader aspects of the problem. Providing context to these issues can improve overall public understanding. Highlighting multiple perspectives with input and comments from experts, advocates, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), researchers, and former victims can enhance the quality of reporting and public information. These insights can also provide access to reliable information, context, and key information into the broader social and legal aspects of human trafficking.

### Story angle findings from all countries to be noted

The language and structure of these stories are also crucial. Once investigative reporting is done on the issue, journalists should be more aware of how they tell the story in the best interest of having balance without being sensational. In such circumstances privacy becomes important as well as respect for victims. In narrating the story, journalists have to be careful that they do not exploit or incur further trauma to the victims. There is a potential danger where photos of victims appear on social media and media houses may report them because journalists believe that the story is a “scoop”.

The degree of collaboration between journalists with NGOs, law enforcement, or anti-trafficking organizations when reporting on human trafficking, varied. Trinidad and Tobago has the most active NGO landscape and the issue of TIP heightened as a result of the influx of Venezuelan migrants and asylum-seekers. In addition, Trinidad and Tobago’s Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) is more active than in the other countries. In Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Saint Lucia, there is a heavy dependence on the police services for information. There were short term awareness campaigns by governments in each country and no cohesive sustainable campaign to improve sensitivity, advance advocacy or offer recommendations and solutions.



Barbados Government Information Service, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2022



Trinidad and Tobago Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) Advertisement, July 2022. This was published in local newspapers and on the CTU Facebook page.

The analysis done for this report did not show any evidence of whether there was any positive impact from awareness and education. However, it is noteworthy that there were very few stories on the causes, and consequences of human trafficking.



To a lesser extent, there was hardly any empathetic coverage except for the case of Trinidad and Tobago where the highest level of media reports was observed.

There was no evidence that legislative and policy change issues were considered, based on media coverage observed.

It is also noteworthy that there was a scarcity of media coverage that highlighted the roles of law enforcement, NGOs, and other stakeholders in combating human trafficking. There was a lack of collaboration between NGOs and other actors with the media, where there was potential to do so.

Upon a review of some of the popular news themed Facebook pages, there was an insignificant number of TIP stories. Coverage of TIP was less than 1%. Most of these appeared as republished posts from the main newspaper stories. There were stories on online news sites and the digital versions of the newspaper where TIP stories were published. However, the feedback and comments were almost nil.

There were almost no instances of cross-border collaboration which could be useful as these countries face similar issues and overlapping case narratives. There was also a lack of Investigative Reporting on TIP. There is potential as is exhibited in the series on TIP done by the Caribbean Investigative Journalism Network, [www.cijn.org](http://www.cijn.org):



<https://www.cijn.org/sex-trafficking-in-plain-sight/>

The researchers and journalists who worked on this report interacted with several editors and producers. The sentiments expressed in this interview are consistent with those of other editors and is a representation of the group.

### What are the regulations and norms for covering trafficking in persons?

The routine, which would be common in all media houses, is to receive a press release from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) or Non-Government Organization (NGO) about a Trafficking in Persons case. Media houses also find out about cases via their coverage of the courts.

In terms of reporting norms, one senior editor at a leading daily newspaper commented that in addition to internal guidelines about reporting on children, most media houses would also be guided by the content below:

Sexual Offences Act 2019  
Children Act 2012  
UNHCR Guidelines

The editor emphasized that the protection of children and their identities were a main focus when utilizing these points of guidance. There was no empirical evidence to form an opinion as to the extent of sensitivity by the media of reporting on children and victims of human trafficking.

### **What are the impediments to reportage?**

Resources and capacity in media houses. He commented that most media houses in Trinidad and Tobago are under resourced in terms of staff as well as financially. If there is a lack of staff to cover daily beats, in-depth reporting suffers.

Lack of resources in a newsroom can significantly hinder good journalism for several reasons including insufficient funding for in-depth reporting and reduced capacity for fact-checking and editing.

### **Composition of newsrooms # of men vs women**

According to the Senior Editor, at his newspaper newsroom which is considered one of the largest newsrooms in Trinidad and Tobago, there are 9 men and 10 women in the newsroom. At the affiliate television station there are 5 women and 6 men. Female journalists may sometimes have a greater requirement for security or would be assigned stories which would be deemed risky for them to cover.

### **Is there protection for tipsters, sources, victims and perpetrators?**

The sentiment is that there is no official legislation but there is “understood practice” where tipsters, sources, victims and perpetrators are protected in that their identities are not disclosed. Their names, contact information and images are not disclosed to anyone as they are the journalists’ sources.

### **Is there fear of reprisal covering trafficking in persons?**

According to him, in Trinidad, this is not an issue when covering Trafficking in Persons. However, based on interactions with journalists for this research, the issue of self-censorship arose. A third of journalists said there is a culture of not covering a story if it is risky depending on who it is linked to and if as a journalist, you may be harmed. One journalist said, “there are stories I will not do because it makes no sense because it will take a lot of time which the editor will not allow because there is so much going on to cover.”

### **Sourcing and Verification**

There is a high dependency on information from press releases issued by government agencies. There is rarely an attempt to develop TIP stories and request data specific to this. Gaining access to sources of data



or to the data can be time-consuming and challenging. There is a lack of open sources of data online or at state agencies. Although there is FOI legislation in Trinidad and Tobago, and Antigua and Barbuda there are delays in getting the information. The journalists interviewed in these countries shared their views on the FOI process and said it slowed down their ability to report when they have deadlines. They also opined the lack of structure to effectively get the information and said that there was often a lot of back and forth. They believed that information on any crimes should be available at all times and be updated regularly via the relevant websites.

Accessing the data from the government entities for this research study was also difficult with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago where there was a primary source and the Counter Trafficking Unit information could be accessed.

### **Sensitivity and Ethical Considerations**

Although no editorial policy exists in any newsroom specific to TIP and based on the research review period of July 2021 to June 2023, journalists do display attention to the sensitivity of the victims.

A limitation was the ability to track social media discussions on TIP, so we are unable to form an opinion of how the public sees the issue.

### **Collaboration and Advocacy**

There was a lack of collaboration and advocacy for TIP stories in all four countries. This is because these stories are not being actively pursued nor are initiatives on TIP being embarked upon. Some journalists were unaware of any NGOs who specialize in supporting efforts towards TIP.

### **Impact and Solutions**

There was no evidence of Solutions Journalism being employed. Solutions journalism, in the context of human trafficking, should focus on the response to the issue rather than just highlighting the problem itself. This approach would present stories that detail effective interventions, policies, and practices being implemented to combat human trafficking. Highlighting Successful Interventions locally or outside of the country, such as community-based approaches to raise awareness, or effective rehabilitation programs for survivors; and the effectiveness can be impactful.

The level of coverage of potential solutions was poor and there were not many in-depth investigative pieces which could offer a comprehensive view of the issue and explore different approaches. There were many shorter news segments which focused on current affairs aspects of Trafficking in Persons stories such as the apprehension of perpetrators or press releases of TIP reports. This signals the fact that there is low impact, and that the media is not a strong advocate for improvement.

There were few stories on solutions even though some initiatives were mentioned in reports. There was a lack of follow-up stories on such programs and projects. There were no examples of positive changes or outcomes resulting from media coverage.

### **Impact and Public Perception to Support Advocacy of improved TIP policy**

Story angles examining the impact of TIP on communities and the public perception of the issue and those affected was non-existent. This limits the degree to which the public is motivated to take action against human trafficking, via advocacy, creating dialogue or constructive discussion and giving feedback to lawmakers or political influencers who can lobby for policy changes.

Media coverage plays a crucial role in shaping public perception of human trafficking, influencing awareness, attitudes, and responses to the issue. The impact of media coverage on public perception can be both positive and negative, depending on various factors such as the framing, accuracy, and frequency of the coverage.

A former senior official involved in counter trafficking in the region stated that “insufficient reporting is done on the legislative aspect including who is charged, why cases are delayed and what the government’s plans are following the TIP reports from the United States Department”. The individual explained that “the media can have an impact by reporting in more detail on these areas which will make the public aware and perhaps influence those in authority to be proactive.”

### **Diversity and Inclusivity**

By including multiple perspectives from different sectors of society such as representatives such as survivors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), law enforcement, and community leaders, a more comprehensive understanding of the issue can be reflected in the reporting. This inclusivity can help in identifying both the problems and the solutions, offering a multidimensional view of human trafficking. Working closely with NGOs, advocacy groups, and researchers can enhance the accuracy and depth of reports.

### **Technology and Social Media**

Researchers were unable to address this as there were limitations with regards to accessing and monitoring online data from social communities.

### **Collaboration and Partnerships**

It was evident that there is a lack of networking by journalists to create a forum for an exchange of information on TIP. A former Head of the Counter Trafficking Unit in Trinidad and Tobago said that the media did not report on or highlight the work of the civil society organizations (CSOs) that were truly making a difference and performing very positive work in the communities. She noted that the press releases and information submitted to the media by such entities were not published.



## 6.4. Recommendations

### Internal Actions

1. Based on the interviews with journalists to gain insight on their formal training on Trafficking in Persons, the gaps for knowledge and skills development was recorded as a list of relevant training topics. Capacity building via formal training on Trafficking in Persons with specific attention to topics such as:
  - a. Investigative Reporting
  - b. Data Journalism
  - c. International and Regional Contexts
  - d. Legislation
  - e. Human Interest Storytelling
  - f. Well-formulated interrogation of interviewees and other sources
  - g. Ethics in Reporting
  - h. Use of Language
  - i. Investigative Techniques
  - j. The networking of experts and references
  - k. Multimedia Reporting
  - l. Story Angles and generation of high impact and attention
2. Present more stories about the solutions to TIPs and what is being done to minimize or prevent it.
3. Respondents in the interviews who are attached to newsrooms said that they have Codes of Ethics for Journalists but there is no formal editorial policy. The development of editorial policies with the inclusion of clauses in accordance with existing guidelines related to TIP for use by newsrooms can be helpful. This can be done as regional policy to cover other key areas including the coverage of youth in crime. Due to the lack of training and available capacity-building sessions in newsrooms and at tertiary level institutions in the region, the development of a multimedia handbook for reporting on TIP can ensure all aspects of the topic are covered. In addition, it will be a resource and helpful reference for entry level journalists in newsrooms. The handbook will include the topics mentioned in the first recommendation point. If this is done as an online resource, it will allow for updates and hyperlinks to updated information. There is a need for relevant and real information on TIP. Such primary sources who are intimately familiar with the circumstances surrounding the issue, allows for valuable insight and better articulated discussion. The establishment of a network of CSOs, NGOs, government, media and other stakeholders for easy access to information will close the information and feedback gaps which currently exist. Acquiring accurate and updated statistics and information from reliable government sources is a challenge. Government authorities need to maintain better databases of information which are available online. Media needs to advocate for this with support of entities such as UNDP. Accurate and updated information results in reliable and credible reporting based on evidence.



4. Quarterly or monthly presentation on developments in the area of TIP in the region by governmental or other leading stakeholders will support the flow of information on TIP. The sessions will be formatted where the media along with key stakeholders hold a discussion and updates on major developments are shared. This will allow the issue of TIP to stay on the front burner at newsrooms as an area to which attention needs to be placed. It will create top of mind awareness and an exchange of information which does not currently exist.

## Lobbying

5. Capacity-building for NGOs and CSOs who work on TIP initiatives should be introduced and include areas such as how to communicate with the media, how to communicate with the public and how to be effective with their messaging. With small newsrooms, media houses are stretched and cannot cover all news. By empowering NGOs and CSOs who work on TIP, will allow the related stories to be published in the public domain so that important and impactful information can reach the public.
6. Government entities responsible for TIP projects need to be more accessible and more responsive to the media. Some journalists expressed the lack of feedback from government. Encouraging the establishment of better relationships between media and government entities overseeing TIP activities, will ensure more regular communication and information.
7. They should lobby for the implementation of Access to Information Acts/Freedom of Information acts to legislate better availability of and access to data from government. In the information age it is unacceptable that basic data of national importance is not available to the press. There is precedent in the region for such legislation in Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago.
8. Media houses should join forces across borders with each other and lobby strongly through the Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM) to help ensure the viability of the media industry which faces many challenges. The ACM can also seek support from other associations such as Chambers of Commerce, Media Association Jamaica (MAJ), Press Association of Jamaica (PAJ), International Press Institute (IPI).

## 6.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of media coverage on trafficking in persons (TIP) underscores the critical role that the media plays in shaping public perceptions and responses to this issue. Through an examination of various news articles and reports, it is evident that there are notable gaps that warrant attention.

Media houses need to address the theme of trafficking in persons from multiple perspectives and employ techniques of investigative reporting. Most stories scratch the surface and do not uncover the plethora of story angles which can create meaningful impact. A lot of the issues remain hidden. This underreporting shields the complexity of the crime and leads to public dismissal of the social implications. Addressing the lack of proper reporting on human trafficking requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders, including governments, law enforcement agencies, media organizations, and civil society organizations.

Reporting on human trafficking requires significant resources, including time, funding, and expertise. Many

media outlets lack the resources to investigate and report on trafficking thoroughly. A more in-depth approach is necessary to perpetuate effective responses and garner support for stronger policies to address all aspects of trafficking in persons (TIP).

Moving forward, it is imperative despite severe resource constraints to try and adopt a more nuanced and balanced approach to reporting on human trafficking. This entails amplifying diverse voices, providing context to individual stories, and prioritizing investigative journalism that exposes the root causes and systemic failures perpetuating trafficking. By doing so, the media can empower audiences to engage critically with the issue, advocate for meaningful change, and contribute to the collective efforts to combat human trafficking and support survivors.

# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX 1

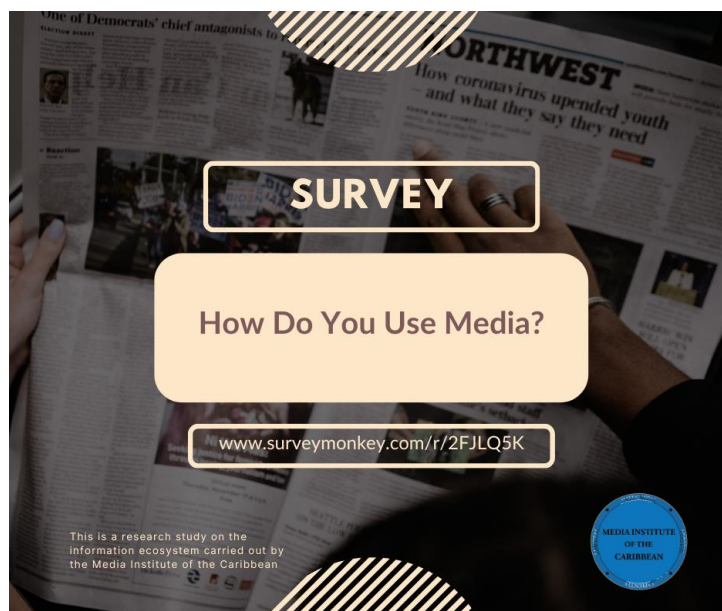
Dipstick Survey to gain some insight on how media is consumed in the countries represented in this report

Social Media Post (February 10<sup>th</sup> to February 20<sup>th</sup> 2024)

*We want to understand how you use media. Please take this 2-minute survey*

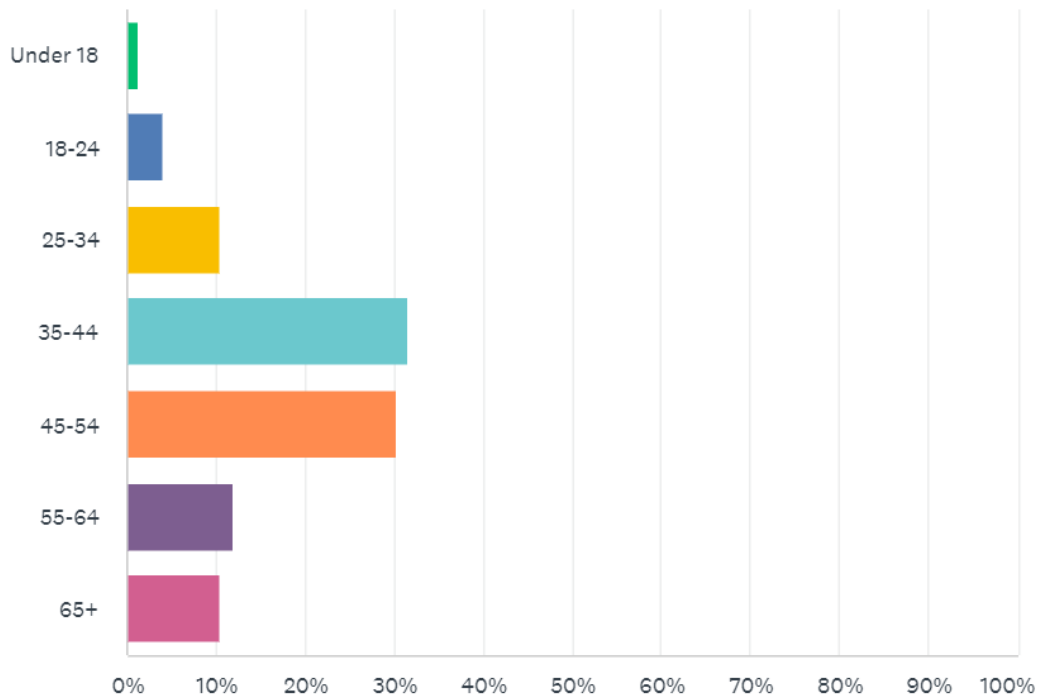
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2FJLQ5K>

*This is a research study on the information ecosystem carried out by the Media Institute of the Caribbean*

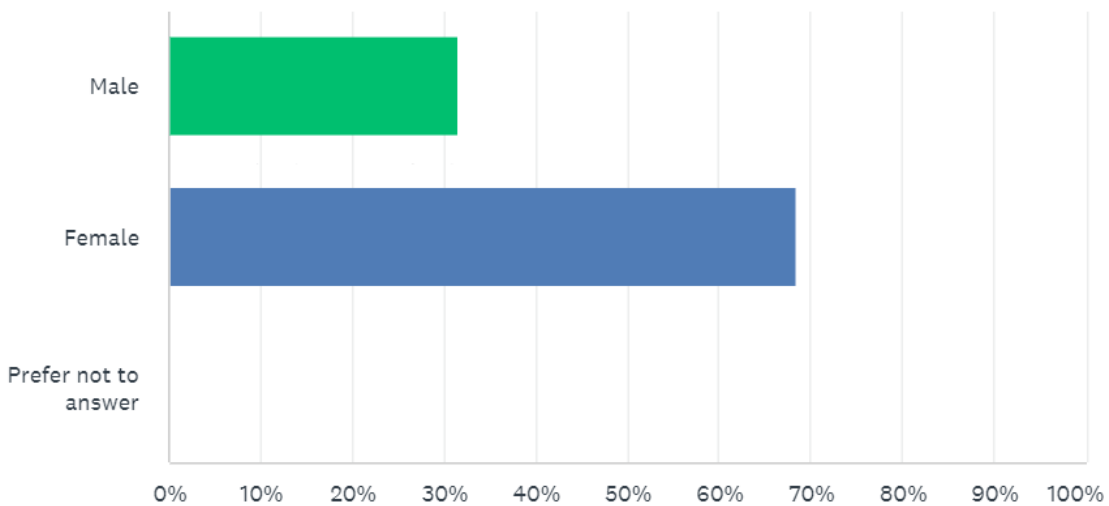


## MEDIA & INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM

### Question 1: How old are you?



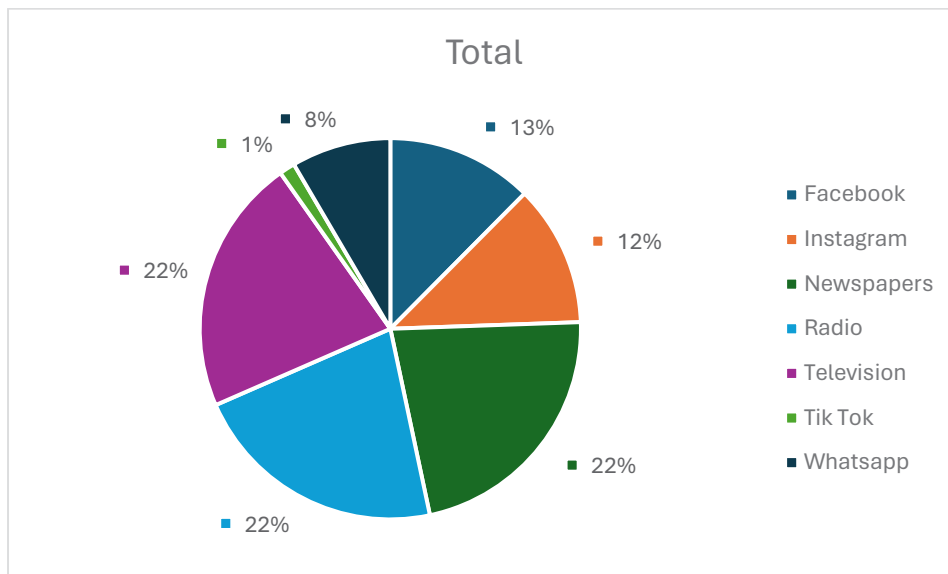
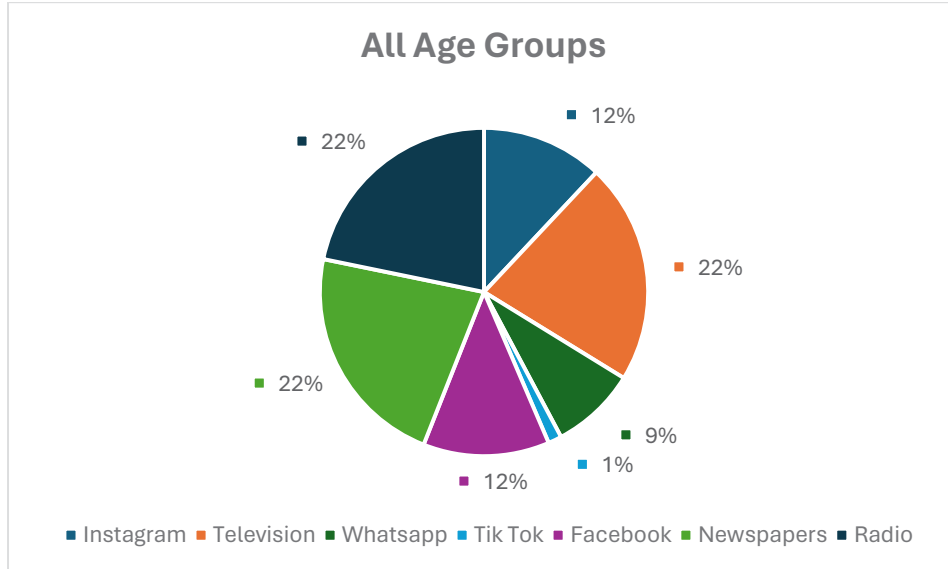
### Question 2: What is your gender?



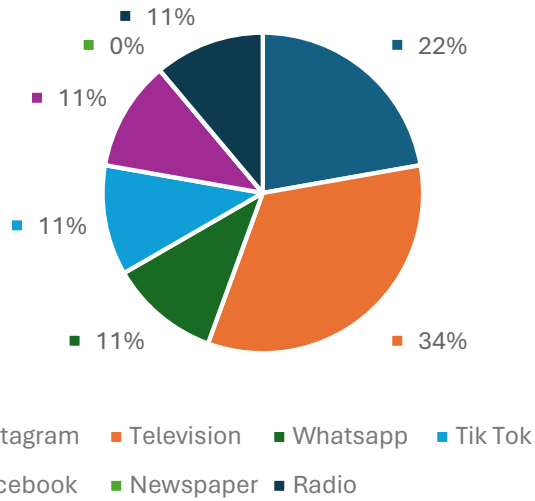
**Question 3: Which source do you rely on the most for information?**

**N.B.: There was only one respondent in the Under 18 age group:**

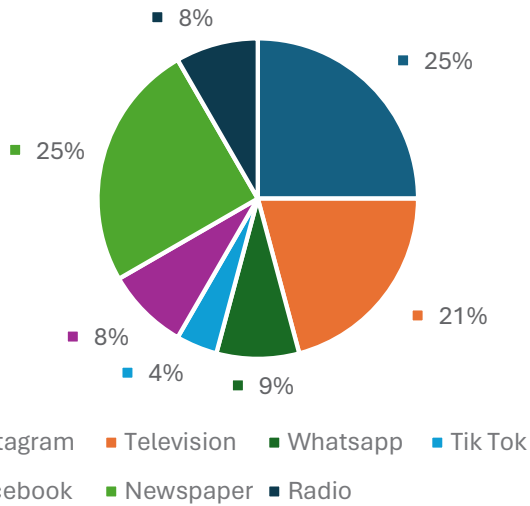
1. Radio
2. Instagram
3. Newspapers



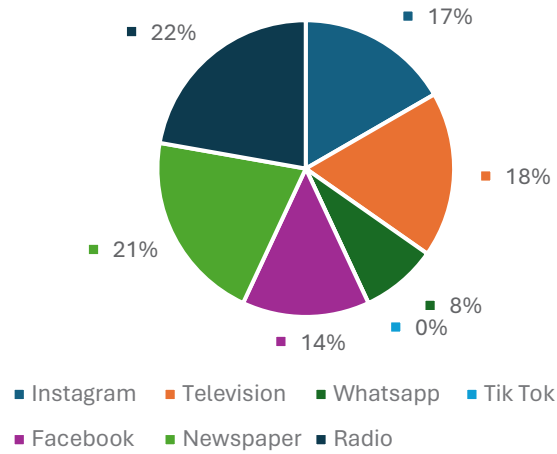
### Age Group 18-24



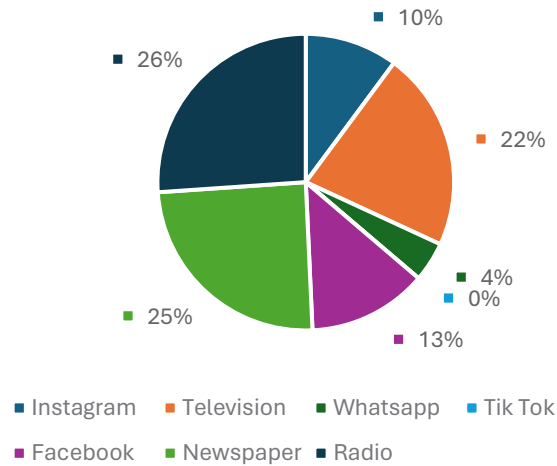
### Age group 25-34



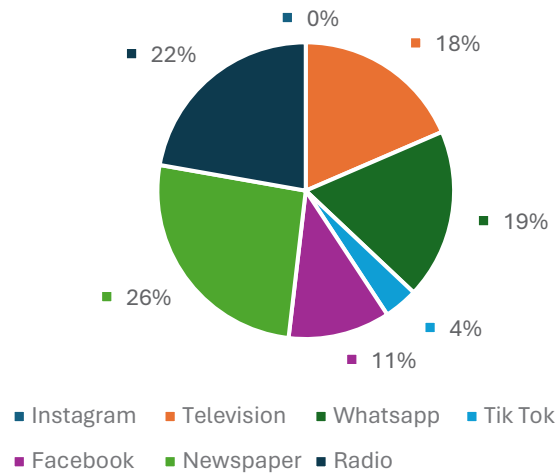
### Age Group 35-44



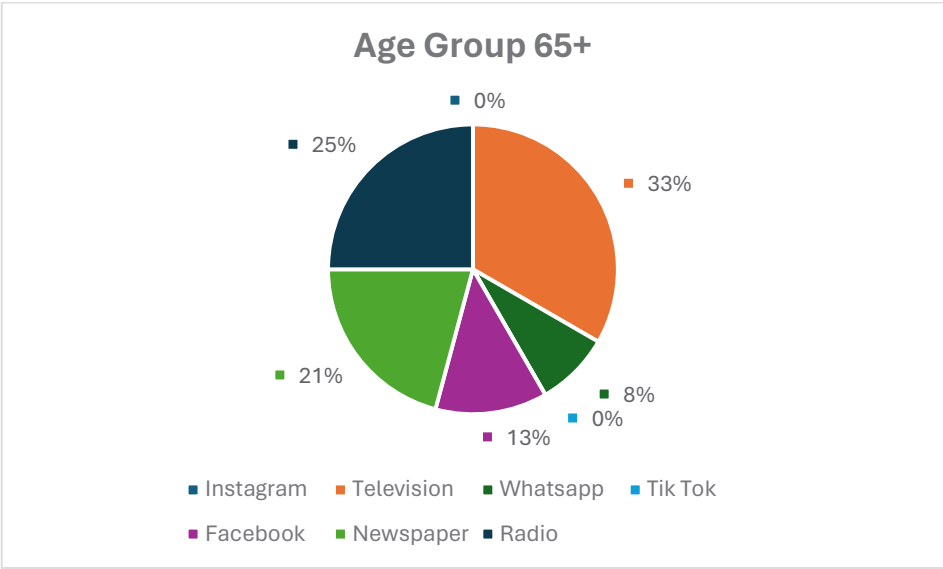
### Age Group 45-54



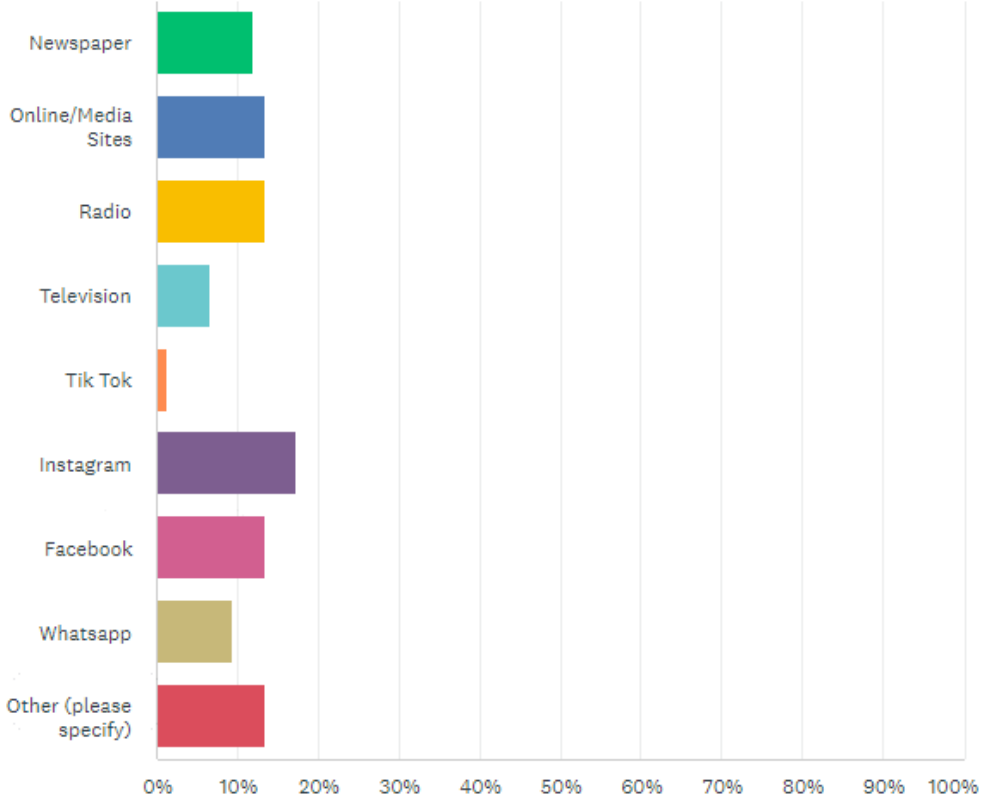
### Age Group 55-64







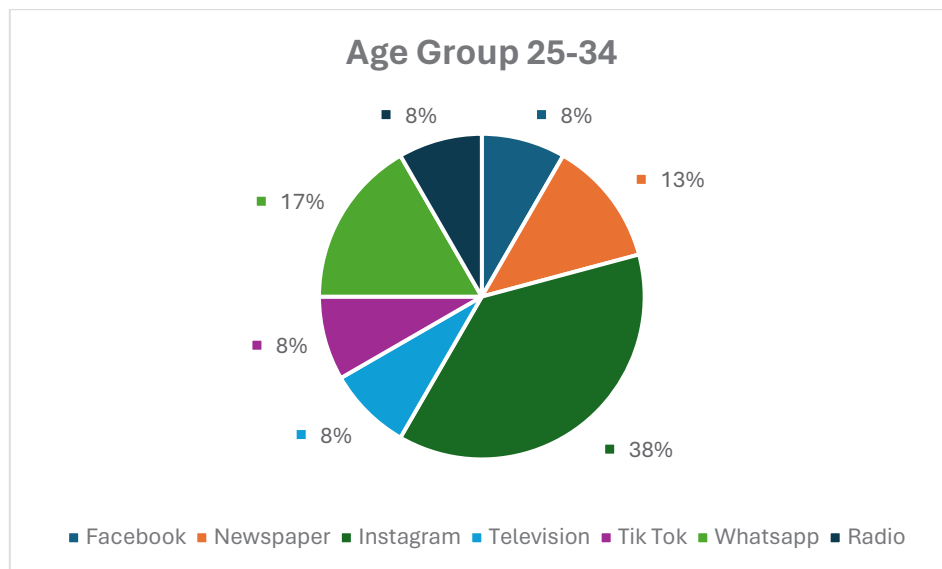
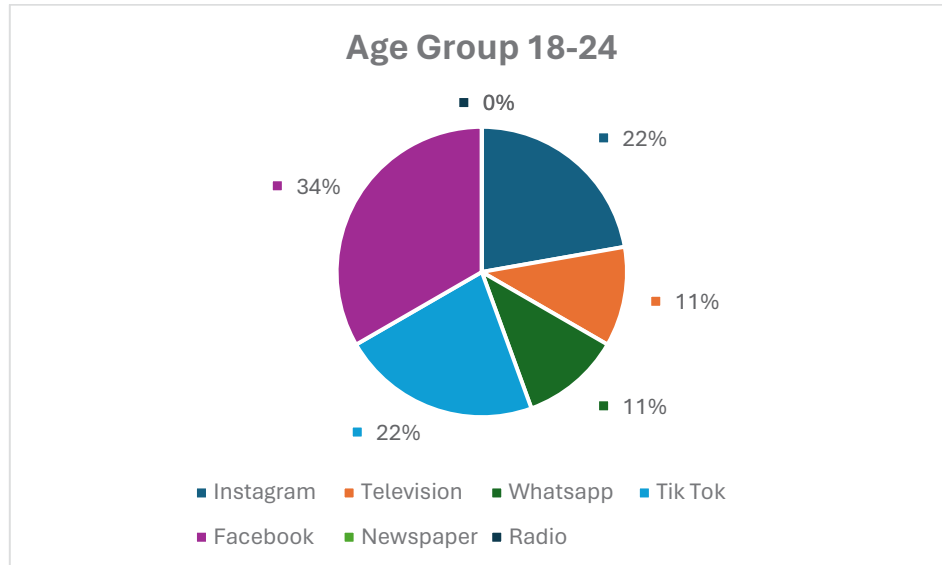
**Question 4: Where do you get most of your information?**

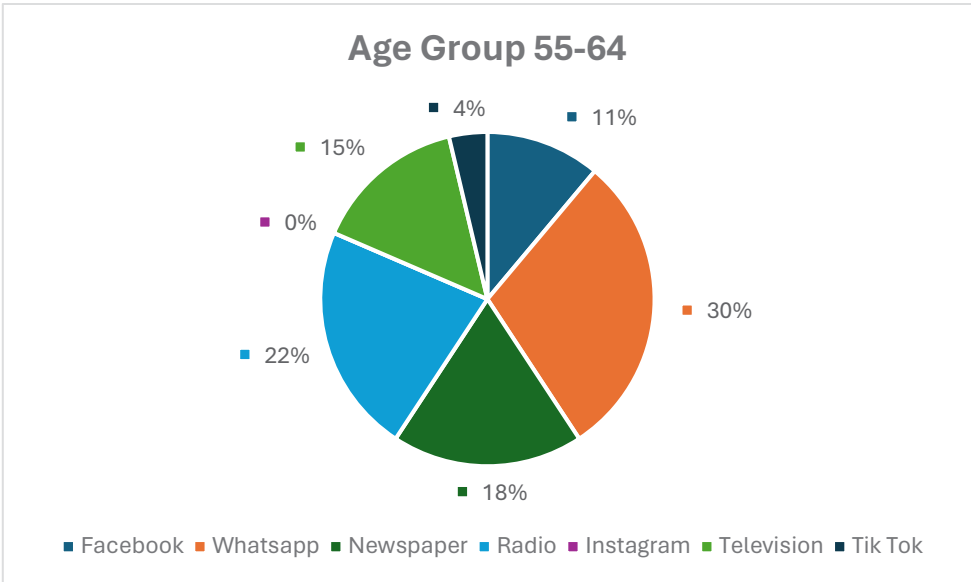
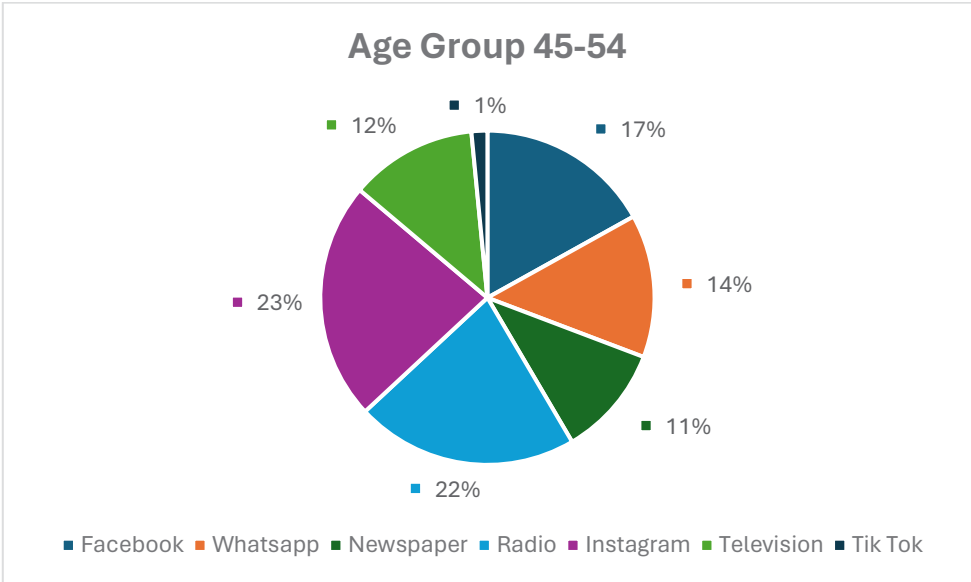
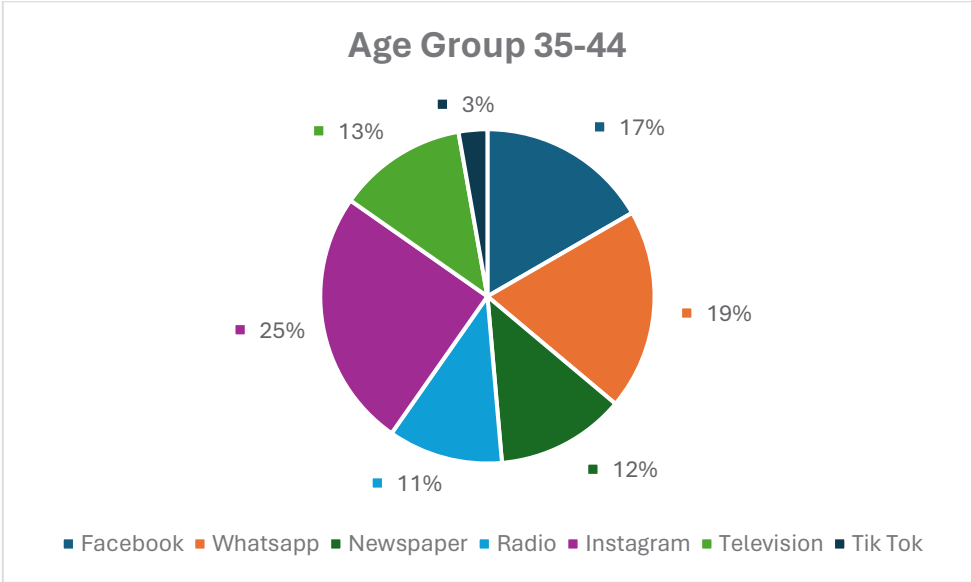


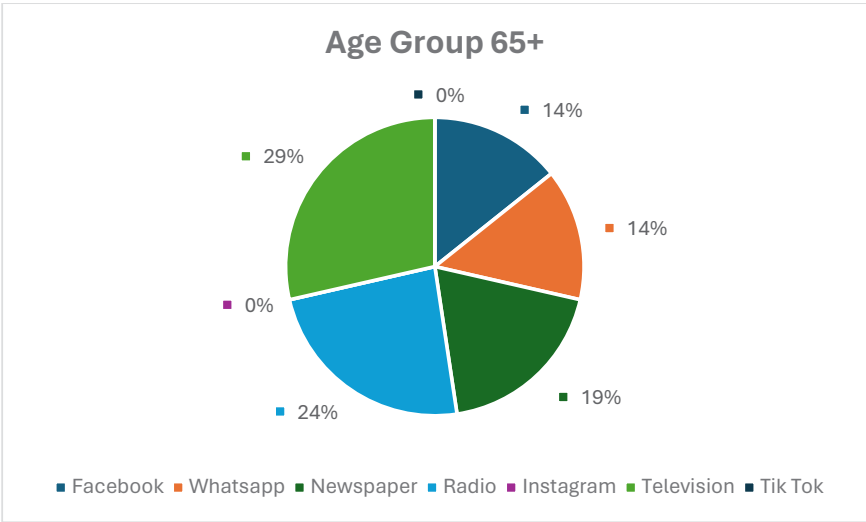
**Question 5: Which form of media do you spend the most time with?**

**N.B.: There was only one respondent in the Under 18 age group:**

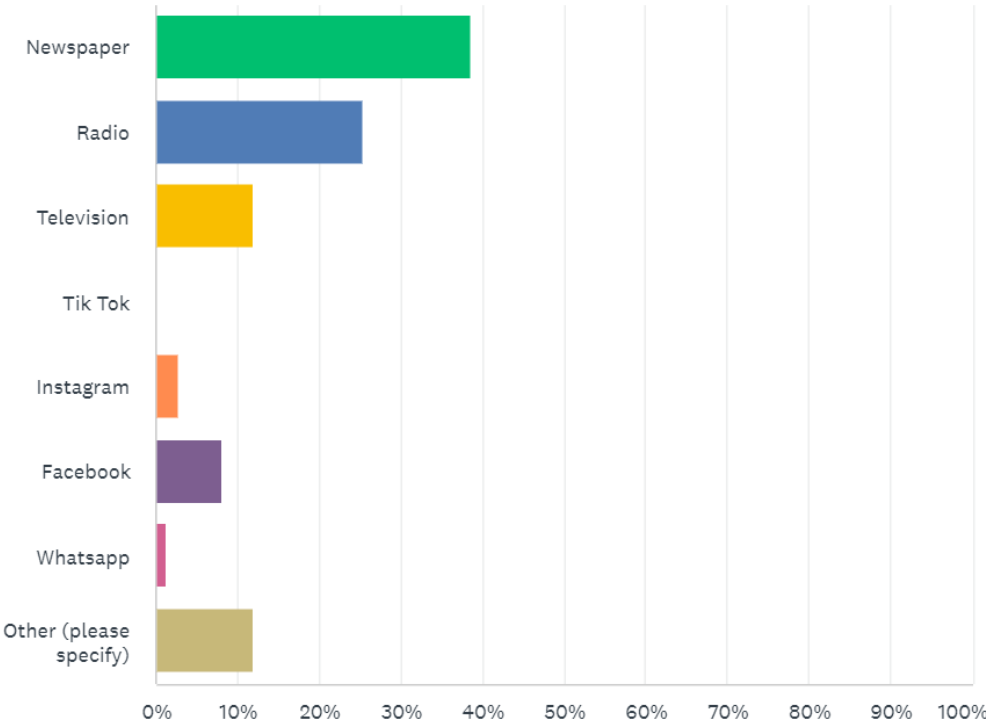
1. Tik Tok                      2. Instagram                      3. Whatsapp



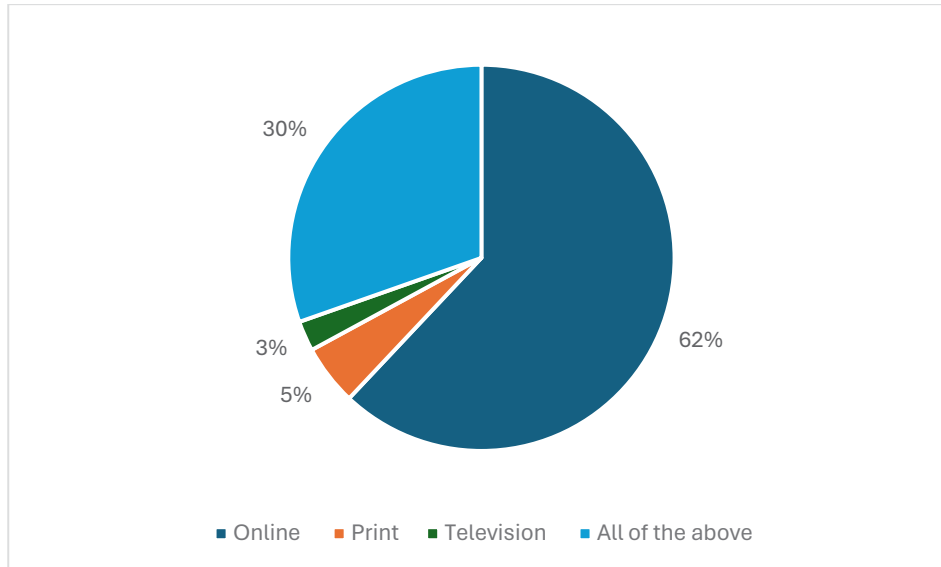




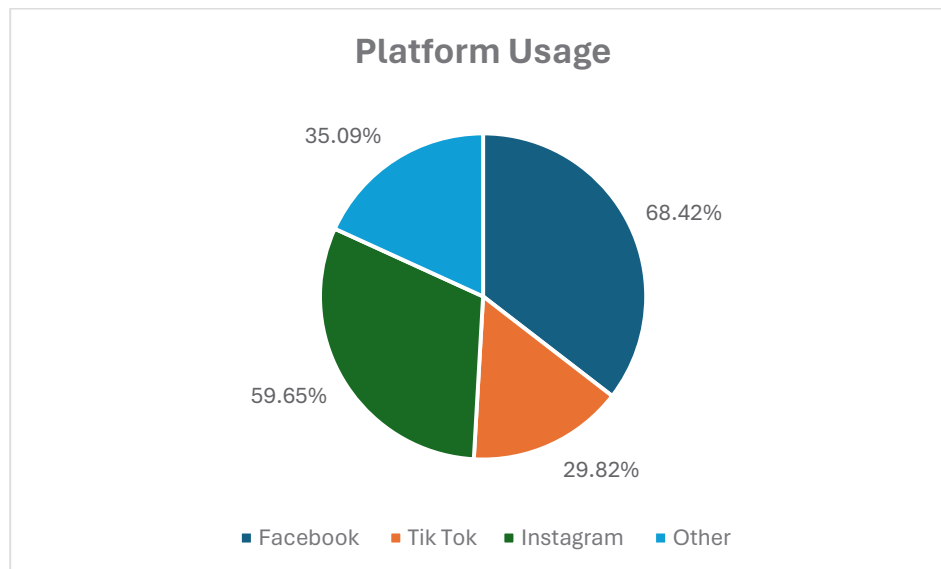
**Question 6: Which media do you trust the most?**



**Question 7: Which forms of media do you think carry fake news/false information?**



**Question 8: Which of these platforms do you prefer to stay informed?**



# APPENDIX 2



## THE BARBADOS POLICE SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

BRIDGETOWN

All Correspondence to be Addressed: -

THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE  
P.O. BOX 84  
BRIDGETOWN,  
BARBADOS  
WEST INDIES.

Ref. No. 34A242A/5

2024-01-29



Media Institute of the Caribbean  
22B Old Hope Road  
Kingston 5  
Jamaica

Dear Madam,

Reference is made to your letter dated December 21, 2023, requesting statistical data relating to *Youth Involvement in Crime and the Trafficking in Persons* for the period July 2021 to June 2023.

The data requested is contained in the tables appended. Should you require any further information or have specific questions regarding the data shared, please contact us at 1-246-430-7208.

Alicia Brewster, Inspector (ag)  
for Commissioner of Police



# JUVENILES INVOLVED IN CRIME

## Crimes committed by Juveniles July – December 2021

OFFENCES	No. of JUVENILES CHARGED	AGE/AGE RANGE
Aggravated Burglary	1	16
Assaults	13	13-16
Criminal Damage	3	14-16
Affray	2	16
Wandering	1	14
Rape	1	16
Serious Bodily Harm	5	13-16
Theft	4	14-16
Trespass	1	15

## Crimes committed by Juveniles January to December 2022

JUVENILES 11-16	JANUARY to DECEMBER 2022	
OFFENCES	No. of JUVENILES CHARGED	AGE RANGE
Aggravated Burglary	2	14-15
Assaults	39	12 to 16
Assault with intent to rob	1	15
Criminal Damage	6	11 to 16
Endangering life	1	16
Fear of violence	1	13
Affray	2	15
Rape	1	16
Robbery	6	13-16
Serious Bodily Harm	7	13-16
Theft	5	12 to 16
Other summary crimes	11	14-16
Other minor crimes against the person	1	15
Possession of drugs	4	15-16
White collar crimes	1	16

Crimes committed by Juveniles January – June 2023

<b>JUVENILES 11-16</b>	<b>JANUARY to JUNE 2023</b>	
<b>OFFENCES</b>	<b>No. of JUVENILES CHARGED</b>	<b>AGE RANGE</b>
Murder	1	15
Aggravated Burglary	1	16
Assaults	31	13-16
Assault with intent to rob	1	14
Burglary	6	13-16
Criminal Damage	4	16
Affray	1	16
Robbery	3	14-16
Serious Bodily Harm	2	13-14
Theft	7	13-16
Other summary crimes	3	14-16
Other minor crimes against the person	4	12 to 14
Possession of drugs	2	15-16



# YOUTH INVOLVED IN CRIME

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**NB: YOUTH 17-29**

Crimes committed by **Youth** July – December 2021

<b>YOUTH 17-29</b>	<b>JULY to DECEMBER 2021</b>	
<b>OFFENCES</b>	<b>No. of YOUTH CHARGED</b>	<b>AGE RANGE</b>
Murder	11	17-29
Aggravated Burglary	8	17-28
Robbery	10	19-29
Arson	1	25
Assaults	95	17-29
Burglary	20	17-28
Breach of Covid -19	32	17-29
Criminal Damage	30	19-29
Affray	7	19-26
Rape	2	17-27
Other sex crimes	8	19-29
Serious Bodily Harm	28	19-28
Trespass	10	19-27
Endangering Life	4	18-25
Escaping lawful custody	2	23-25
Handling Stolen property	1	29
Kidnapping	1	27
Other minor crimes against the person	11	20-28
Other summary crimes	25	17-29
Possession of firearm/ammunition	15	18-29
Possession of drugs	59	17-29
Theft	46	17-27
Threats	10	17-29
White Collar Crimes	7	21-29

Crimes committed by Youth January to December 2022

<b>YOUTH 17-29</b>	<b>JANUARY to DECEMBER 2022</b>	
<b>OFFENCES</b>	<b>No. of YOUTH CHARGED</b>	<b>AGE RANGE</b>
Murder	17	20-29
Aggravated Burglary	16	18-28
Robbery	21	20-29
Arson	1	23
Assaults	183	17-29
Assault with intent to rob	3	19-28
Burglary	25	17-29
Breach of Covid -19	4	17-28
Criminal Damage	64	17-29
Affray	15	17-27
Rape	8	18-29
Other sex crimes	7	17-29
Serious Bodily Harm	34	19-28
Trespass	6	18-27
Endangering Life	16	17-28
Escaping lawful custody	4	24-28
Handling Stolen property	6	17-26
Going equipped	4	22-29
Other minor crimes against the person	11	18-28
Other summary crimes	50	19-29
Possession of firearm/ammunition	55	18-29
Possession of drugs	142	18-29
Theft	89	17-29
Threats	24	18-29
White Collar Crimes	10	19-29
Conspiracy	1	24

# TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

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Persons charged with Trafficking in persons July 2021 to June 2023

<b>Trafficking in persons</b>	<b>JULY 2021 TO JUNE 2023</b>	
	<b>No. of YOUTH CHARGED</b>	<b>AGE RANGE</b>
Trafficking in children	<b>2</b>	<b>27</b>

Note: The above matters occurred during the period July to December 2021.

## Classification

**Other Sex Crimes:** - Sex with minor/serious indecency/Incest/Procuration

**Other minor crimes against the person:** - Violent disorder/ Cruelty to child /Malicious communication

**Other summary crimes:** -Disorderly behaviour/Disorderly conduct/ Possession of offensive weapon/Smoking in a prohibited area at airport/Insulting language/Causing a disturbance/Trespass/Possession of camouflage/Disembarking other than a port of entry/Fail to comply with bail condition/Insulting Language/False Declaration

Crimes committed by Youth January – June 2023

<b>YOUTH 17-29</b>	<b>JANUARY to JUNE 2023</b>	
<b>OFFENCES</b>	<b>No. of YOUTH CHARGED</b>	<b>AGE RANGE</b>
Murder	3	22-25
Aggravated Burglary	6	18-29
Robbery	16	17-28
Assaults	114	17-29
Assault with intent to rob	1	25
Burglary	22	17-29
Criminal Damage	41	17-29
Affray	3	18-28
Rape	2	29
Other sex crimes	11	17-29
Serious Bodily Harm	22	18-29
Trespass	7	20-29
Endangering Life	6	21-29
Escaping lawful custody	2	24-26
Handling Stolen property	3	18-21
Fear of violence	4	23-29
Going equipped	1	18
Harassment	3	21-25
Other minor crimes against the person	5	21-29
Other summary crimes	30	17-29
Possession of firearm/ammunition	28	19-29
Possession of drugs	54	17-29
Theft	47	17-29
Threats	11	20-28
White Collar Crimes	4	19-26

# APPENDIX 3

TABLES SHOWING JUVENILE S ARRESTED AND CHARGED FOR THE PERIOD 2015, AND 2020 TO 2022

SOURCE: GRENADA POLICE SERVICE

DATA VALIDITY		
Valid	475	475
Missing	0	0

DATA DESCRIPTION	AGE	YEAR
Mean	16.5	2018.89
Std. Dev	1.37	2.8
Minimum	11	2015
Maximum	18	2022

AGE	NO. OF PERSONS
11	1
12	4
13	7
14	37
15	56
16	102
17	149
18	119
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>475</b>

SEX	NO. OF PERSONS
F	46
M	429
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>475</b>

PARISH	NO. OF PERSONS
Carriacou	12
No fixed place	2
St. Andrew	128
St. David	69
St. George	184
St. John	31
St. Mark	24
St. Patrick	16
St. George	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>475</b>

YEAR	NO. PERSONS
2015	156
2020	145
2021	96
2022	78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>475</b>

OFFENCE	NO. OF PERSONS
Aggravated Assault	1
Assault with a dangerous Instrument	6
Attempted Rape	1
Burglary	2
Causing Harm	114
Cultivation of Marijuana	2
Dangerous Harm	2
Entry into building	2
Fraud by false pretence	1
Grievous Harm	23
Handling a controlled drug	4
Housebreaking	63
Importating a controlled drug	1
Incest	3
Indecent Assault	12
Maiming	1
Malicious Damage	1
Money Laundering	1
Murder	1
Possession of Ammunition	3
Possession of Cocaine	3
Possession of Firearm	1
Possession of Marijuana	36
Possession of a Controlled Drug	8
Possession with intent to Supply	11
Possession within 100 yds of school	1
Rape	5
Robbery	1
Robbery with violence	5
Sexual Assault	2
Sexual Int. with a person 13 yrs	4
Sexual Int. with a person bet. 13	27
Sexual Int. with a person under 13	11
Stealing by reason of employment	2
Stealing from a dwelling house	23
Stealing from a shop	2
Stealing from a storeroom	1
Stealing from a Person	4
Threats of Death	2
Trafficking a controlled drug	6
Violation of privacy	1
Violent Language	3
Wounding	72
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>475</b>

# APPENDIX 4

## INDICATORS

### KEY QUESTIONS OF INTEREST FOR ANALYSIS YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME & VIOLENCE

By considering these questions, one can gain insights into the media's role in shaping public perceptions of youth crime and identify potential areas for improvement in journalistic practices.

A listing of stories and reports will be done and these questions will be considered for each in order to determine trends.

#### 1. **Framing and Tone:**

- **How is youth crime framed in headlines and articles?** Is the focus on individual incidents, trends, or specific demographics?
- **What is the tone of the reporting?** Is it sensationalized, empathetic, objective, or fear-inducing?

#### 2. **Language and Labels:**

- **What language is used to describe youth involved in criminal activities?** Are they labeled with terms like "delinquent," "offender," or "troubled youth"?
- **Are there differences in language based on the demographic characteristics of the individuals involved?**

#### 3. **Representation:**

- **How are youth portrayed in accompanying images or videos?** Are there stereotypes perpetuated, and do the visuals contribute to a particular narrative?
- **Are there differences in representation based on factors such as race, socioeconomic status, geographic location, or gender?**

#### 4. **Context and Causes:**

- **Does the media provide context for youth crime?** Are underlying factors such as poverty, education, or family dynamics explored?
- **Are there efforts to explore the root causes of youth crime, or is the focus primarily on the criminal act itself?**

#### 5. **Accuracy and Statistics:**

- **What sources of information are used to form the basis of the reporting?** Primary or Secondary?
- **Are statistical representations accurate and contextualized?** Do reports provide a comprehensive view of youth crime trends, or do they focus on isolated incidents?
- **Does there appear to be an effort to fact-check and verify information before publication?**

6. **Impact on Perception:**
  - **How might media coverage influence public perception of youth crime?** Does the reporting contribute to fear, stigmatization, or empathy towards the youth involved?
  - **Are there examples of responsible journalism that seek to educate and inform rather than sensationalize?**
7. **Policy and Solutions:**
  - **Does the media discuss policy implications and potential solutions?** Are there discussions about preventive measures, rehabilitation, or community-based initiatives?
  - **Is there a balance between reporting on problems and highlighting positive efforts and success stories related to youth crime?**
8. **Diversity of Voices:**
  - **Whose perspectives are included in the reporting?** Are voices from affected communities, youth advocates, and experts consulted to provide a more nuanced understanding?
  - **Is there a diversity of opinions and experiences represented in the coverage?**
9. **Comparative Analysis:**
  - **How does the media coverage of youth crime compare to the actual statistical prevalence?** Are certain types of crimes disproportionately highlighted?
  - **Are there significant differences in the reporting of youth crime compared to adult crime?**
10. **Long-Term Effects:**
  - **What are the potential long-term effects of the media coverage on youth involved in crime?** Does the coverage contribute to stigma and hinder rehabilitation and reintegration efforts?

# APPENDIX 5

## INDICATOR 1.1

### KEY QUESTIONS OF INTEREST & ANALYSIS

#### TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (TIP)

To gain insight into how the media reports and covers stories on human trafficking

#### 1. **Frame and Perspective:**

- How does the media typically frame stories related to human trafficking?
- What perspectives or angles are commonly emphasized in these stories?
- Are there specific themes or narratives that are consistently present in media coverage of human trafficking?

#### 2. **Narrative Approach:**

- Are human trafficking stories typically presented as isolated incidents, or is there an effort to connect them to broader social issues?
- How does the media portray the victims and perpetrators of human trafficking?
- Sensationalism vs. Sensitivity: How does the media balance the need to inform the public with the risk of sensationalizing or exploiting sensitive content related to human trafficking?
- Are there guidelines or ethical considerations that journalists follow in reporting on such issues?

#### 3. **Sourcing and Verification:**

- How do journalists verify information when reporting on human trafficking cases?
- What sources do they rely on, and how do they ensure the credibility of those sources?
- Are there challenges or limitations in obtaining accurate information on human trafficking incidents?

#### 4. **Sensitivity and Ethical Considerations:**

- How does the media approach the sensitive nature of human trafficking stories, particularly when it involves victims and survivors?
- What ethical guidelines or considerations are followed when reporting on these issues?



- How does the media balance the need for public awareness with the potential harm caused by sensationalizing or misrepresenting the issue?
5. **Collaboration and Advocacy:**
- To what extent do journalists collaborate with NGOs, law enforcement, or anti-trafficking organizations when reporting on human trafficking?
  - How does the media contribute to advocacy efforts and public awareness campaigns related to human trafficking?
6. **Impact and Solutions:**
- Does media coverage of human trafficking focus on the problem itself or also explore potential solutions?
  - Are there examples of positive changes or outcomes resulting from media coverage?
7. **Impact and Public Perception:**
- How does media coverage impact public perception of human trafficking?
  - What challenges exist in accurately representing the complexities of human trafficking in the media?
8. **Diversity and Inclusivity:**
- How diverse is the representation of human trafficking victims in media stories?
  - Are there efforts to ensure inclusivity and avoid perpetuating stereotypes in reporting on human trafficking?
9. **Technology and Social Media:**
- How has the rise of social media and digital platforms influenced the reporting of human trafficking stories?
10. **Collaboration and Partnerships:**
- Are there examples of media outlets collaborating with other organizations, both journalistic and non-journalistic, to cover human trafficking comprehensively?
  - How does collaboration contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the issue?

# APPENDIX 6

## BARBADOS

### List of News Reports

TITLE
AG makes statement on B'dos upgrade to tier 2 in US' TIP report
AG urges Bajans to speak up
An inconvenient truth
Another milestone for activist against human trafficking
Barbados must seriously take note
Barbados removed from human trafficking watch list
Barbados upgraded to Tier 2
B'DOS Taking Human Trafficking Seriously
Bolt, Freeman fighting worthy cause
Call for more protection for sex workers
Campaign to stamp out human trafficking
Diplomat, sex industry boss differ on sex trafficking, violence plaguing sex workers
Down To Brass Tacks
Down to Brass Tacks
Dr. Chang Urges Renewed Focus by CARICOM on Tackling Trafficking in Persons and Firearms
Exchange of information vital to fighting transnational crime
Farm labour probe
Fighting for migrant women
Front Page - Tragic Tale
Front Page Headlines - Beware Danger at Our Door
Global Estimates: Modern slavery grows globally
Greater public education and sensitization needed to combat human trafficking
Human Trafficking Cases identified by police
Human trafficking education campaign launching today
Illegal trafficking 'a challenge' for region
Interpol MOU signed
More cooperation needed to handle new challenges
More resources needed for human trafficking fight
National security conference
National task force puts spotlight on human trafficking
Network of coercion
New Interpol office gives cops added boost
On the prowl
On the right track
Region's Top Cops attend Conference
RSS training for better security
Tackling crime in region
The urgent scourge of child labour
Tougher law
Trafficking concerns
Training a success
UN official urges investment in human trafficking fight as police get fresh training
US boost to help fight crime
What is human trafficking?

**SAINT LUCIA**  
List of News Reports

<b>ARTICLE TITLE</b>
Human Trafficking for the purpose of Labour Exploitation
Saint Lucia Participates in Top Regional and International TIP Meetings
St Lucia renews fight against Human Trafficking despite the challenges
St Lucia at Two Human Trafficking meetings
Counter-Trafficking Amendment Act comes into force
St Lucia Keeps Human Trafficking Ranking
Saint Lucia retains Tier Two in Human Trafficking 2020 global ranking
Department of Home Affairs Warns Human Trafficking is Very Real
2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Saint Lucia remains at tier 2
Human Trafficking — Adult Entertainment Industry A Contributing Factor, DPC Charler
Senior Cop Says Adult Entertainment Patrons Could Be Contributing To Human Trafficking
St Lucians arrested in Canada for human trafficking
Law Enforcement Participates in Human and Drug Trafficking Exchange

**ANTIGUA**  
List of News Reports

<b>ARTICLE TITLE</b>
Country making progress in combatting human trafficking – report
Two men facing Human Trafficking Charges
TIP Unit Interview
Was Alex Feng a victim of human trafficking
Prime Minister dismisses claims that Africans aboard Antigua Airways were trafficked to Antigua
Business Woman Charged With Human Trafficking
The CGID responds to Prime Minister Gaston Browne
Call for a Full Public Inquiry into the Antigua Airways Human Trafficking Scandal
‘I wake at night crying’ – Mehel Choksi
Guadeloupe launch human trafficking and manslaughter investigation after French boat sinks on
Tragedy at sea: Boat carrying African migrants from Antigua capsizes near St Kitts
Nation still ‘failing’ to stamp out human trafficking. US report says ‘sex trafficking occurs in bars,
Detainees released in human trafficking probe
Patron reports that police executing human-trafficking warrant at nightclub behaved in
Stiffer penalties coming for human trafficking offences
Prime Minister Gaston Browne expressing concern after a stabbing
Government steps in following increase in gang related activities
Police criticised for preveiced in action to deal with reports
Youth parliamentarians on gand violence
Police Commissioner on Youth Crime
More from the Police Commissioner
Case committed for men accused of trafficking Indians
Two men facing human trafficking charges in Antigua
Antigua and Barbuda ambassador Dario Item makes sensational international scoop
A&B to benefit from projects to reduce human trafficking and youth crime
o Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons2023 Trafficking in Persons Report
African migrant smuggling upsurge – analyst
Antigua says no automatic citizenship for stranded African nationals
PM Browne says gov’t is ‘a victim’ in West African saga
Antiguan Govt accepts some blame for Antigua Airways migrant fiasco
UPP delivers petition to Governor General calling for inquiry into Antigua Airways
Boat tragedy was ‘entirely foreseeable’ and warrants impartial investigation
Nation still ‘failing’ to stamp out human trafficking.
African survivors’ escape from St Kitts’ custody prompted U-turn on allowing them

**TRINIDAD & TOBAGO**  
**List of News Reports**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ARTICLE TITLE</b>
15/02/22 4:28 AM	Human trafficking
23/03/23 7:11 AM	US State Department Human Rights practice report 2022
09/11/21 7:48 PM	TT At UN Universal Periodic Review - 7:48 PM
08/03/22 7:49 PM	Continue Inter Agency Collaboration - 7:49 PM
11/05/22 7:00 PM	US Homeland And Security To Help TT - 8:13 PM
25/07/22 7:39 AM	UN World Day Against Trafficking in Persons Interview - 7:39 AM
25/07/22 7:14 PM	Help Stop Humans Trafficking - 7:14 PM
30/07/22 7:06 PM	Human Trafficking - 7:06 PM
10/08/22 7:05 PM	Human Trafficking Ring Bust In Venezuela - 7:05 PM
15/08/22 7:17 PM	Cops Rescue Women And 2 Men Charged 1 - 7:17 PM
08/02/23 6:14 AM	Human Trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago Interview - 6:14 AM
24/02/23 7:44 PM	Gov. on Fuel Prices - 7:44 PM
24/02/23 7:46 PM	PM- Go After Your Colleagues - 7:46 PM
25/02/23 7:06 PM	Are UNC Officials Involved In Human Trafficking - 7:06 PM
26/02/23 7:03 PM	Moonilal Don t Trivilise Human Trafficking - 7:03 PM
28/02/23 7:05 AM	TTPS Safety Tips Interview-TTPS Media Ambassador-Sergeant Ancil Forde - 7:05 AM
01/03/23 6:12 AM	Human Trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago Interview-Political Analyst
01/03/23 6:35 AM	Have Your Say-Open Forum - 6:35 AM
01/03/23 7:00 PM	Top Cop Orders Probe - 7:00 PM
01/03/23 7:02 PM	Browne- Gov. Not Involved - 7:02 PM
05/03/23 7:04 PM	Kamla No Need For A Wild Goose Chase - 7:04 PM
10/03/23 7:00 PM	PM- The US Knows Everything - 7:00 PM
14/03/23 7:54 AM	Political Landscape Interview-Former Minister of Agriculture-Dr Devant Maharaj
22/03/23 7:45 AM	Have Your Say Segment-Open Forum - 7:45 AM
24/04/23 7:03 PM	Human trafficking akin to slavery - 7:03 PM
24/04/23 7:08 PM	Young woman offered for sale - 7:08 PM
25/04/23 6:10 AM	Have Your Say Segment-Human Trafficking - 6:10 AM
17/11/21 7:51 PM	Specilized Training For TTPS - 7:51 PM
01/12/21 6:41 AM	Human Trafficking Interview - 6:41 AM
06/01/22 7:22 AM	The Police and You Segment - 7:22 AM
27/01/22 7:22 AM	The Police and You Segment-Public Information Officer-TTPS-ASP Sheridan Hill - 7:22 AM
03/05/22 6:00 AM	Corruption in Politics Interview-Political Analyst-Dr Indira Rampersad -
20/07/22 7:08 PM	Post Vacant - 7:08 PM
22/07/22 6:14 AM	Human Trafficking Interview-Deputy Director-Counter Trafficking Unit-CTU-Klmoy Thomas -
22/07/22 7:11 PM	CTU Could Lose Funding - 7:11 PM
24/07/22 7:12 PM	Naparima MP Wants Answers To Traffic Persons Report
01/12/22 6:18 AM	16 Days of Activism-Human Trafficking Interview
24/02/23 7:09 PM	Cleared - 7:09 PM
01/03/23 7:13 PM	Investigation Launched - 7:13 PM
02/03/23 7:02 PM	Investigation Welcomed - 7:02 PM
03/03/23 7:07 PM	Human Trafficking in TT - 7:07 PM
06/03/23 6:02 AM	Trinidad Guardian Headlines - 6:02 AM

12/03/23 7:00 PM	Special Court To Deal With Human Trafficking - 7:00 PM
13/03/23 6:22 AM	Human Trafficking Interview Part 1 - 6:22 AM
27/04/23 7:12 PM	US Ambassador warns to look out for gaps - 7:12 PM
29/05/23 7:10 PM	Probe continues - 7:10 PM
15/06/23 7:03 PM	US Department of State says T T has not convicted traffickers - 7:03 PM
04/07/21 5:37 AM	'A few attorneys are working with human traffickers'
05/07/21 4:09 AM	Regarding legal fees
17/07/21 6:41 AM	Venezuelan charged with human trafficking
28/08/21 6:04 AM	Pilot, attorney and 2 others freed
01/09/21 6:16 AM	Esperance Soroptimists advocate for trafficked victims
22/09/21 6:08 AM	US\$1m in funds to counter human trafficking in T&T
07/11/21 6:28 AM	Jamaica: Tougher penalties for human trafficking
15/11/21 4:36 AM	National Security Minister: Jamaica committed to fighting human trafficking
29/12/21 5:31 AM	Former independent senator Basharat Ali dies
24/01/22 4:43 AM	27 V'zuelan women rescued
04/02/22 5:13 AM	Human-trafficking suspect nabbed at Piarco airport
07/02/22 4:43 AM	Give info on those joining gangs
09/02/22 5:38 AM	Human rights body calls for scrutiny into killing
13/02/22 5:16 AM	MPs express concern over PM's statement
16/02/22 5:44 AM	Trafficking cries ignored
17/02/22 6:53 AM	Caricom security ministers, law enforcement officials meet
11/03/22 5:50 AM	More males becoming victims of human trafficking
13/03/22 2:49 AM	'Gang members helping illegal Venezuelans'
19/03/22 5:39 AM	Top cop: No foreign gangs in T&T
14/04/22 5:24 AM	US: Abuses by T&T security forces
12/05/22 6:45 AM	FBI joins TTPS in crime fight
07/06/22 6:31 AM	Treating the hidden wounds of trafficking
09/06/22 6:19 AM	Contract killings on the rise
13/06/22 6:18 AM	USAID and Canada announce US\$444m aid for hemisphere
21/06/22 6:42 AM	Highway hit
27/06/22 4:15 AM	PCA: Comply with search warrants
04/07/22 1:10 AM	Prof Deosaran has doubts on 'no bail'
05/07/22 5:55 AM	Deyalsingh disappointed
05/07/22 6:18 AM	The power of the film 'Trafficked'
08/07/22 6:26 AM	Jacob: TTPS will ensure quicker justice
21/07/22 6:12 AM	'Not enough has been done'
23/07/22 7:11 AM	Charles questions inaction over human trafficking
31/07/22 7:25 AM	Child trafficking and the paradox of technology
07/08/22 7:03 AM	T&T at risk losing assistance
07/08/22 7:04 AM	Excerpt from the report
09/08/22 5:58 AM	Judge calls for review of State bodies
16/08/22 5:45 AM	Five women rescued, two men charged
09/09/22 6:27 AM	T&T, US govt join forces against human trafficking
12/09/22 6:23 AM	Guyanese police find foreign women at bar
24/09/22 6:56 AM	3 appear for trafficking
25/09/22 5:26 AM	About Perry M Kendall Jr
25/09/22 5:47 AM	Pennywise manifestation

04/10/22 5:38 AM	Light firearms sentences demoralise police officers
31/10/22 5:50 AM	TTPS backs new Bail Bill
26/11/22 7:27 AM	Solving the woes of our Judiciary
01/12/22 3:44 AM	'No functioning scanners at PoS port'
21/12/22 6:13 AM	Home For Migrant Girls opens
25/12/22 8:23 AM	You can be compensated by State
25/02/23 4:30 AM	PM takes on UNC
26/02/23 4:19 AM	Bacchanal brewing
26/02/23 4:20 AM	PM: Kamla's claim pathetic
26/02/23 4:42 AM	US State Dept must explain
27/02/23 5:59 AM	The BIG Question
01/03/23 5:35 AM	What 'senior Govt officials' means
02/03/23 5:39 AM	Special team to probe claims
02/03/23 5:44 AM	Moonital 'expects T& T to get off Tier 2 watchlist'
03/03/23 5:51 AM	Nothing to take to cops
03/03/23 5:52 AM	No knowledge of any Govt official involved in human trafficking
03/03/23 5:53 AM	'Let top cop question Rowley first'
05/03/23 5:36 AM	Why did accusers wait 11 years?
05/03/23 5:58 AM	Politicking with human trafficking
06/03/23 3:15 AM	Kamla slams hearsay over human-trafficking
13/03/23 5:30 AM	Safe houses for victims
14/03/23 6:20 AM	Falling short on justice
15/03/23 5:39 AM	Opposition MP calls for probe into Balisier House construction
17/03/23 6:51 AM	Officials: At least four interviewed
19/03/23 7:39 AM	Is Trinidad a real place?
22/03/23 6:47 AM	US points to 'killer cops'
24/03/23 3:45 AM	PCA sends file to legal dept
11/04/23 5:48 AM	Our human trafficking problem
15/04/23 7:17 AM	Prosecution failures
18/04/23 3:31 AM	Top cops blame gangs, drugs, youths
14/05/23 8:52 AM	Harsher penalties for human trafficking
15/05/23 2:34 AM	Beaten, raped, sold for sex
17/05/23 2:43 AM	An LGBT plea
24/05/23 3:31 AM	Sex ring busted: two held
31/05/23 6:34 AM	Pilot to face human-trafficking charges
01/06/23 3:53 AM	Devant questions Gray-Burke's role
06/06/23 6:26 AM	Too many lives disrupted
17/06/23 6:01 AM	T&T police not doing enough
18/06/23 6:21 AM	'More needs to be done'
22/06/23 6:59 AM	A matter of urgency
22/06/23 7:03 AM	V'zuelan brothel owner likely to face other charges
26/06/21 4:30 AM	Human Rights body notes T&T's deplorable migrant conditions
29/06/21 4:38 AM	AG: Pepper spray law effective in one month
03/07/21 4:21 AM	AG: Some weaponising courts as business ventures
06/07/21 2:44 AM	T&T downgraded
25/07/21 4:40 AM	Under the microscope ...Gary Griffith seeks second term as CoP
31/07/21 4:49 AM	Stop Human Trafficking
02/08/21 4:50 AM	Soroptimist on World Day against Trafficking In Persons: Identify, stop, report
02/08/21 5:01 AM	Venezuelan opponents call for greater efforts to protect migrants
10/09/21 5:08 AM	Esperance Soroptimists advocate for trafficked victims
05/10/21 4:59 AM	Two Venezuelans under Anti-Gang Legislation
07/11/21 4:32 AM	Caribbean to make history at World Congress on Justice With Children
20/11/21 4:38 AM	A better future for every child
08/12/21 5:17 AM	InterClub T&T stands up for women

20/02/22 4:58 AM	The story of Nico: A refugee in a new land
21/02/22 4:33 AM	My fight against human trafficking
22/02/22 5:35 AM	Human trafficking and legality
01/03/22 4:45 AM	Human trafficking in Ukraine
08/03/22 6:17 AM	Human trafficking and religion
21/04/22 4:48 AM	Truly independent institutions needed to stop the rot in a small society
03/05/22 6:41 AM	Sexual abuse at St Jude's home for girls
04/05/22 5:22 AM	Minister condemns culprits involved in physical, sexual abuse of children
12/05/22 3:21 AM	Jacobs: 134 gangs account for most of T&T's daily crimes
21/05/22 4:36 AM	SSA expected gangs to spread since 2019
10/06/22 4:44 AM	Arima raid was not a breakthrough
11/06/22 4:46 AM	Three on drug charges to appear in Tobago court
13/06/22 6:58 AM	Weapons being used by criminals cost as much as \$50,000
14/06/22 6:53 AM	A return to the St Dominic's Children's Home—trigger warning
21/07/22 4:22 AM	T&T still on US human trafficking watch list
23/07/22 4:26 AM	Acting CTU boss admits much work ahead
25/07/22 6:29 AM	Charles questions non-action against Govt officials named in 2022 US Trafficking in Persons Report
26/07/22 7:04 AM	Radio host bought sex from teens
31/07/22 4:25 AM	Hinds: T&T making strides on countering human trafficking
02/08/22 5:11 AM	Emancipation in light of modern day slavery
16/08/22 6:57 AM	5 women rescued, 2 men charged with sexual offences and human trafficking
30/09/22 4:35 AM	Impact of the Budget on crime, national security
11/10/22 7:04 AM	Caricom must step in to help Haiti
18/10/22 7:10 AM	US Embassy helps T&T fight human trafficking with CariSecure
20/10/22 4:24 AM	10 Latin females rescued at brothel still in custody
28/10/22 4:57 AM	Harsh measures are necessary to combat serious crimes
29/10/22 4:15 AM	Revised Bail Bill in the works
20/11/22 2:36 AM	Jacob - Missing Pennywise murder accused highlight need for bail reform
27/11/22 4:48 AM	US commits US\$34M to boost Jamaica's economy
10/12/22 6:54 AM	Regional Chamber coordinator seeks harsher crime penalties
20/12/22 5:58 AM	Hinds: 70% of the society wants to us fail on crime
21/12/22 6:46 AM	Home for migrant girls opened
25/02/23 4:38 AM	PM says UNC Parliamentarians on Trafficking in Persons Report
27/02/23 5:29 AM	PM slams Kamla for disgraceful slander
28/02/23 4:43 AM	UNC infighting over human trafficking rages on
28/02/23 5:03 AM	Both Rowley and UNC wrong on human trafficking
28/02/23 5:16 AM	Crime and politics
01/03/23 4:45 AM	US State Department calls for full human trafficking probe
01/03/23 5:05 AM	Hopeful, but seeing is believing
02/03/23 4:20 AM	CoP launches probe
02/03/23 4:21 AM	Vasant: I was propositioned by girls working for UNC MP
03/03/23 4:17 AM	Sold by tracker for \$10,000
03/03/23 4:19 AM	Expert: T&T Govt showed no interest
04/03/23 4:17 AM	Cops contact Devant for info on human trafficking claim
04/03/23 4:19 AM	Police seek human trafficking expert's info
04/03/23 4:41 AM	Probing everything—once and for all

05/03/23 4:19 AM	Human trafficking in T&T –A tale of deceit
05/03/23 4:23 AM	Get into communities to stop trafficking
05/03/23 4:25 AM	Central the number one hotspot for human trafficking
05/03/23 4:31 AM	Devant gives statement to cops
06/03/23 5:32 AM	Devant: Human trafficking an open secret in UNC
06/03/23 5:43 AM	An apology, acquittals and allegations
07/03/23 5:29 AM	Misconceptions about human trafficking
10/03/23 4:34 AM	To fix human trafficking —fix border control first
11/03/23 4:16 AM	Rowley: T&T could lose US help on national security
11/03/23 4:41 AM	Lashing & mashing, trashing & smashing — UNC, PNM
12/03/23 5:34 AM	Brothels bring shame to Central community
12/03/23 5:36 AM	Labour exploitation as prevalent as sexual exploitation in T&T
12/03/23 6:30 AM	Celebrating International Celebrating Women’s Day
13/03/23 6:13 AM	Hinds: Special Court for human trafficking cases soon
14/03/23 6:30 AM	Will a special court bring desired success?
15/03/23 5:55 AM	Name UNC MP in human trafficking publicly
16/03/23 5:28 AM	The business of human trafficking
17/03/23 4:27 AM	TTPS probe into human trafficking allegations against UNC exec ongoing
18/03/23 3:25 AM	Citizens in anti-human trafficking march at Red House
23/03/23 4:25 AM	Trinidad flagged for police killings, neglect of asylum seekers
24/03/23 4:23 AM	Human rights lawyers urge Govt to act on US report
24/03/23 4:27 AM	Four men accused of forced prostitution, trafficking of Venezuelan teen freed
28/03/23 6:14 AM	Criminal networks and human trafficking
18/04/23 6:19 AM	Zero convictions for trafficking in persons
25/04/23 6:01 AM	Hinds: Govt committed to countering human trafficking
29/04/23 4:06 AM	Hinds: TTPS processing 42 applications for pepper spray permits
30/05/23 5:24 AM	Police makes progress in human trafficking probe
13/06/23 3:43 AM	Anti-slavery & Anti-trafficking Law
16/06/23 4:12 AM	Front Page - US State Dept 2023 Trafficking in persons report
16/06/23 4:15 AM	Law officials take money, sex to turn blind eye
17/06/23 4:39 AM	Criminologist not surprised by T&T’s Tier 2 listing
20/06/23 6:01 AM	Short story
23/06/23 4:30 AM	T&T needs immigration, refugee policy
03/07/21 5:48 AM	AG: Some lawyers may be trying to get rich off State
17/07/21 7:22 AM	Venezuelan man blanked bail for human trafficking charge
28/07/21 4:23 AM	Let’s look at trafficking in persons
30/07/21 6:57 AM	Child trafficking and the technology paradox
27/08/21 7:19 AM	CAL pilot, wife freed in 'baby sale' case
15/11/21 7:13 AM	Violation of life and dignity
15/11/21 7:14 AM	AG: TT intensifying fight against human trafficking
13/12/21 7:30 AM	InterClub of TT says: Stand up for Women
27/12/21 7:28 AM	Tricked, trapped, trafficked
28/12/21 6:59 AM	Basharat Ali remembered as an energy giant, gentleman
29/12/21 4:17 AM	TT boat missing in Venezuelan waters
05/02/22 6:27 AM	2 Chinese national get bail on money laundering, illegal gambling charges
09/02/22 5:03 AM	CCSJ, AMMR offer condolences to family of Venezuelan infant killed at sea
13/02/22 7:18 AM	Opposition MP accuses Govt of ignoring human trafficking
14/02/22 7:14 AM	Treating the hidden wounds of human trafficking
17/02/22 7:33 AM	Trafficking cries disdainfully ignored
06/03/22 5:47 AM	Tricked into prostitution



08/03/22 7:13 AM	How UNHCR helps women refugees
20/05/22 6:57 AM	SSA report links drug-trade to prostitution
17/06/22 6:51 AM	Princes Town businesswoman sues State after arrest for human trafficking
07/07/22 6:17 AM	Bail bill defeated
09/07/22 7:41 AM	Ag CoP: Police not daunted by Bail Bill's defeat
22/07/22 6:49 AM	Hinds: TT worked hard to reduce human trafficking
25/07/22 6:25 AM	Charles wants permanent secretaries to demand mandate for crime initiative
26/07/22 6:46 AM	US urges TT to act
27/07/22 4:56 AM	Barbados heartened by upgrade i trafficking in persons report
05/08/22 7:25 AM	Failures in preventing trafficking
09/08/22 6:49 AM	Judge: State must overhaul civil litigation process
15/08/22 7:19 AM	UNC MP: Gov't must do more to fight human trafficking
08/09/22 7:05 AM	Cox: Human traffickers target youngsters on social media
11/09/22 1:07 PM	15 foreign females trafficked in Guyana
12/09/22 7:49 AM	Foreigners found during human trafficking operation at bar in Guyana
19/10/22 5:09 AM	US embassy launches carisecure 2.0 project in T&T
20/10/22 7:15 AM	UN vote delayed on Haiti resolution
21/10/22 7:11 AM	Counter Trafficking Unit, Financial Intelligence Unit sign MOU
19/11/22 6:13 AM	CoP: new vehicles for police by year-end
20/11/22 5:24 AM	One for our roads
24/01/23 4:34 AM	Straight to High Court for sexual, human trafficking offences
07/02/23 4:02 AM	TT can do better
08/02/23 4:47 AM	Tip of trafficking iceberg
27/02/23 6:59 AM	Griffith accuses PM of 'blame game' over US human-trafficking report
28/02/23 5:50 AM	Prosecute officials involved in human trafficking
02/03/23 5:46 AM	CoP launches probe into human trafficking
03/03/23 6:21 AM	48 hours for answers
03/03/23 6:22 AM	Former PP minister ready to spill all to police
03/03/23 6:46 AM	Browne: No Government MP involved in trafficking
07/03/23 6:50 AM	Maharaj, Charles query human trafficking claims
09/03/23 6:34 AM	Devant gives statement
14/03/23 5:58 AM	Devant Maharaj claims smear campaign against him
16/03/23 5:43 AM	Activist urges: Join anti-human-trafficking march on Friday
24/03/23 4:52 AM	4 men freed of human-trafficking charges
14/04/23 6:25 AM	Court slams cops over missing witness
23/04/23 7:22 AM	US hires expert to aid TT's counter-trafficking
29/04/23 5:36 AM	Young, Hinds report on human trafficking, pepper spray
12/05/23 6:11 AM	Ministry welcomes strategic trafficking in persons advisor
12/05/23 6:28 AM	Harsh penalties under new Trafficking in Persons legislation
16/06/23 5:43 AM	TT stays on watch list

16/06/23 6:09 AM	Regional task force rescues trafficked children in TT
17/06/23 5:26 AM	TT narrowly escapes downgrade to Tier 3
19/06/23 7:14 AM	Ex-CTU head: Swift action by Gov't needed
11/06/21 7:17 AM	V'zuelans charged after human trafficking probe
07/07/21 6:10 AM	Antigua denies report on Cuban and Chinese workers
31/12/21 8:36 AM	TT boat missing in V'zuelan waters
07/02/22 8:14 AM	2 Chinese nationals get bail on money laundering, illegal gambling charges
08/03/22 8:50 AM	Tricked into prostitution
28/04/22 9:51 AM	UN migration agency meets THA to discuss collaboration
11/07/22 5:55 AM	Bail bill extension was not needed
08/08/22 8:02 AM	Failures in preventing trafficking
09/09/22 8:43 AM	Cox: Human traffickers target youngsters on social media
24/10/22 8:13 AM	Counter Trafficking Unit, Financial Intelligence Unit sign MOU
10/02/23 7:14 AM	Tip of trafficking iceberg
28/02/23 7:10 AM	Griffith accuses PM of 'blame game' over US report
01/03/23 5:59 AM	US to Gov't: Prosecute officials in human trafficking
06/03/23 9:20 AM	Former PP minister ready to spill all to police
08/03/23 6:03 AM	Maharaj, Charles query human trafficking claims
10/03/23 7:40 AM	Devant gives statement to police
15/03/23 6:09 AM	Devant Maharaj claims smear campaign against him
17/03/23 6:57 AM	Activist urges: Join anti-human-trafficking march on Friday
25/04/23 7:53 AM	US hires expert to aid TT's counter-trafficking efforts
08/12/21 7:16 AM	United Nations 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence Interview - 7:16 AM
14/03/22 6:55 AM	Crime-Going Beyond the Numbers Interview-TTPS Representative-Acting ASP Sheridan Hill
28/03/22 7:28 AM	Increased Number of Missing Persons Interview - 7:28 AM
07/05/22 6:30 PM	Full Support For Sexual Offences Bill - 6:41 PM
25/07/22 6:40 AM	UN World Day Against Trafficking in Persons Interview - 6:40 AM
30/07/22 6:35 PM	Day Against Human Trafficking - 6:35 PM
07/09/22 7:18 AM	USAID-Programmes and Benefits Interview - 7:18 AM
01/03/23 6:34 AM	Newly Appointed US Ambassador Interview - 6:34 AM

# APPENDIX 7

Barbados Nation, 6th August 2021, titled "Call for more protection for sex workers

## Call for more protection for sex workers

A human trafficking expert wants to see more protection for sex workers, particularly non-nationals.

Asked if traffickers, also known as pimps, should be providing sex workers with protection when they are on the streets, Dr Olivia Smith reiterated her call for those involved in trafficking to feel the full weight of the law.

She was speaking in the wake of the death of Jamaican sex worker Odith Henriquez, 44, whose naked, decomposing body was found in the yard of an abandoned house in Beckwith Street, The City, on Tuesday.

"The exploitation of any human being in any form is unacceptable, so there can be no protection by pimps who are perpetrators of exploitation and certainly not in cases of human trafficking, which is a crime," Smith told the **Weekend Nation**.

"Women and girls are among the most vulnerable in our society, and this includes Barbadian women. Many of the women are controlled by both male and female perpetrators who use calling [the Immigration Department] as a fear tactic to control victims, followed by debt burdens they cannot pay off. This has worsened significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"These perpetrators must be held accountable by the law. Law enforcement must in such cases look beyond depending on witness testimony from reluctant persons when crimes are committed, to using other elements of the law such as the **Domestic Violence Act** where the **Trafficking in Persons Act** cannot be strictly applied to a case," she added.

In terms of law enforcement, Smith said she believed more needed to be done.

"There is a growing trend in Barbados where the exploitation of persons for sex and labour is becoming the norm. While law enforcement has a responsibility to ensure that victims are not treated as criminals, this situation points to the importance of public awareness where people can put a frame on what they see and know when to call the police. Exploited persons need to know how to protect themselves and know where to get help from when they need it."

She said non-nationals would often report crimes against them but admitted that many still had a deep-seated fear about stepping forward.

"Often, non-nationals do report rapes and robberies, usually from men they have known who, after a while, prey on them. They will not report to the police for fear of being humiliated by law enforcement, or not wanting Immigration to send them home because this is all they have as a means to feed their children."

When asked if legalising prostitution would solve some of the problems associated with the illegal sex trade, Smith said: "This is an issue of poverty and economics. What is needed before we can get there is everyone's human rights must be upheld, which means the right to choose and to be afforded protection in the law."

Last June, Barbados was placed on the Tier 2 list in the **Trafficking In Persons Report** by the United States Department of State. (MB)

Please see also Pages [14&15](#).

in the illegal drug; and possession of cocaine, intent to supply and trafficking in it. Moore had two convictions for possession of cannabis;

attorney Shadia Simpson represented Moore. (RA)

Please see also Page 16 for more court reports



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