



# MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

## Corporate Communications Unit

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November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **TWO PERSONS ASSOCIATED WITH POPULAR HOTEL IN CENTRAL TRINIDAD CHARGED FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL OFFENCES**

The Ministry of National Security's Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) charged two (2) persons for human trafficking offences following a report received from officials of the Venezuelan Embassy. The accused, **Eli Sylvester** and **Sandy Bedase-Andrews**, appeared in the San Fernando Magistrate Court today, Monday November 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 and were charged under the Trafficking in Persons Act, 2011 for harbouring and receiving two (2) Venezuelan women. The women were rescued by the CTU on Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

**Bedase-Andrews**, who is said to be the owner of *Santa Maria aka Dads Dan Hotel* of Bhagna Trace, Chase Village Chaguanas, was also charged under the Sexual Offences Act, for keeping a brothel and **Sylvester** was also charged for assisting in the management of a brothel.

In accordance with the Trafficking in Persons (TIPs) Act 2011, Trafficking in Persons is defined as:

*"The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power, the abuse of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payment or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation".*

The TIPs Act also states that persons found guilty of Trafficking in Persons, are liable to a fine of not less than \$500,000 and imprisonment of not less than fifteen (15) years.

With regard to the keeping or management of a brothel, under the Sexual Offences Act Section 22:

*"A person who keeps or manages or acts or assists in the management of a brothel is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to imprisonment for five years".*

The rescued Venezuelan women bring the count of persons rescued by the CTU to twenty-six (26), since it was established in January 2013.

The report on which the CTU acted from the Venezuelan Embassy, also serves to underscore the cooperative efforts between Trinidad and Tobago and its foreign partners for combatting human trafficking.

If persons know of or suspect human trafficking activity, they are asked to call CTU's toll-free Hotline at **800-4288 (4CTU)**.

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**Marcia Hope**  
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