



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Homeland Security

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For Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

CTU EXECUTES FIRST PREVENTIVE DETENTION ORDER IN “OPERATION PURPLE RYAIN,” RESCUING VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Port of Spain - The Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) of the Ministry of Homeland Security has obtained its first Preventive Detention Order (PDO) under the Emergency Powers Regulations, 2026, resulting in the arrest of a primary suspect and the rescue of four victims of human trafficking during a coordinated operation conducted in Rio Claro.

The operation, dubbed “**Operation Purple Ryain,**” took place on Saturday 07 March, 2026, on the eve of International Women’s Day. The name “Purple” reflects the international colour associated with justice, dignity, and the global movement to advance the protection and empowerment of women and girls.

Acting on intelligence received through INTERPOL, officers of the Counter-Trafficking Unit conducted several weeks of surveillance at a premises located on Fraser Street, Rio Claro. The operation culminated with the execution of a search warrant.

During the exercise, Mr. Ryan Mark, 42, a Trinidad and Tobago national and businessman, was arrested in accordance with the Emergency Powers Regulations, 2026, and was subsequently detained under a Preventive Detention Order.

A total of eleven (11) individuals were discovered at the location. Following initial screening and investigation by CTU officers, four individuals were confirmed as Victims of Trafficking (VoTs). These included a 15-year-old Venezuelan female national, a 17-year-old Venezuelan female national, a 27-year-old Venezuelan female national, and a 30-year-old Venezuelan female national, who is the mother of the 15-year-old minor.

Preliminary evidence gathered at the premises indicated that the victims had been subjected to prolonged and severe exploitation. Officers observed clear signs of physical abuse, including visible marks of violence and branding on the bodies of victims. Initial information suggests that some of the victims had been confined and exploited at the location for more than two years.



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Two Venezuelan female nationals remain at the Immigration Detention Centre as persons of interest in the ongoing investigation. Four additional individuals found at the premises were transferred to Immigration Enforcement, including one Venezuelan male national and three Venezuelan female nationals.

The rescued victims are currently receiving care and protection through the Counter-Trafficking Unit's established victim support framework, which includes medical attention, psychosocial assistance and safeguarding measures.

The operation was conducted with the support of specialist units of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (TTDF) and the Special Investigations Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS), whose collaboration was instrumental in the successful execution of the exercise.

The Ministry of Homeland Security commends the dedication and professionalism of the officers involved, whose coordinated efforts resulted in the disruption of a trafficking operation and the protection of vulnerable victims.

Investigations into the matter remain ongoing, and charges under the Trafficking in Persons Act are imminent, with further charges expected as the investigation progresses.

Members of the public are reminded that human trafficking remains a serious crime and are encouraged to report suspected cases to the Counter Trafficking Unit through the toll-free hotline at **800-4CTU (4288)** or via the CTU WhatsApp reporting line at **+868-702-0467**.

Human trafficking is organized crime. End the exploitation.



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PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS:



Photo 1: Aerial view of the premises located at Fraser Street, Rio Claro, where the Counter-Trafficking Unit conducted “Operation Purple Ryain,” on Saturday 07 March, 2026.



Photo 2: Authorized Officers of the Counter-Trafficking Unit screen individuals at the scene during “Operation Purple Ryain,” at Fraser Street, Rio Claro.



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Photo 3: Venezuelan nationals are escorted from the premises during “Operation Purple Ryain” and handed over to Immigration Enforcement for further processing.

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