

The Virgin Islands Consortium

In Light Of T&T Sting Operation, Saint Lucians are Being Called on to Remain Vigilant of Human Trafficking

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The Department of Home Affairs and National Security is calling on the citizenry to equip themselves with knowledge about human trafficking.

The department said there is an ongoing campaign which has resulted in growing awareness on this issue and there is a hotline based at the Police Control Room, Royal Saint Lucia Police Force. By simply calling 847 or TIP, at any time the public can report any cases of suspected human trafficking to the police. The lawmen will respond and investigate accordingly. Persons who prefer not to provide their identification are not

required to do so.

Reacting to news earlier this month from Port of Spain that a sting operation by the Special Operations Response Team (SORT) of the Police Service had uncovered what can only be described as modern-day slavery; the Department of Home Affairs and National Security is calling on the Saint Lucia public to pay close attention to this issue which can happen anywhere.

Trinidad and Tobago officers on Wednesday rescued 69 people, four of them women, who were being held captive in cages at a church along the Eastern Main Road, Arouca, Trinidad and Tobago. The men and women, all Trinidad and Tobago nationals, range in ages from their 20's to their 60's, and some were kept in handcuffs. Trinidad Police say the operation began around 12.15 a.m. on Wednesday. Search warrants were issued for human trafficking, after a period of monitoring and investigations. They have so far arrested six people in connection with the disturbing find.

The church they were imprisoned at is a rehabilitation centre.

Police Commissioner Gary Griffith, Deputy Commissioner of Police Operations (Ag.) Jayson Forde, the TTPS's Victim and Witness Support Unit, and officers of the Northern Division CID were on scene at 5.30 am.

Police say senior officers were tipped off to the possible illegal imprisonment of persons months ago. An investigation has since been launched by Commissioner Griffith to determine whether there was negligence of duties on the part of officers. Griffith said he will provide updates on the investigation in due course.

The Saint Lucia public is invited to utilize the information tools that the Trafficking In Persons Secretariat have developed for the purposes of building awareness about this barbaric crime.

The Saint Lucia website on human trafficking is <https://www.antitraffickingslu.org/>. The Facebook is on <https://www.facebook.com/antitrafficking758>.

The Department of Home Affairs and National Security encourages persons to like those pages, subscribe for free, and follow the anti-trafficking campaign, for continuous updates, information and awareness). The Department is also following this story closely.