Inconsistent Trafficking Obligations and How Guyana Got Caught In the Middle

Sarah Langer
Washington University in St. Louis

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INCONSISTENT TRAFFICKING OBLIGATIONS
AND HOW GUYANA GOT CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking is one of the greatest human rights issues facing the world today.\(^1\) Trafficking refers to the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring 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 the control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”\(^2\) Coined “present-day slavery,” human trafficking presents a severe problem globally.\(^3\) By comparing today’s practices of trafficking to the atrocities of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, advocates hope to bring this human rights issue to the forefront.\(^4\)

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2 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, art. 3, Nov. 15, 2000, 2237 U.N.T.S. 319 [hereinafter “Palermo Protocol (2000)"], http://www.osce.org/odihr/19223?download=true. Put more simply, trafficking is a pervasive modality of servitude that operates to transfer persons internationally and domestically for the purposes of forced labor such as, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, domestic servitude, and many other activities. U.N. OFFICE ON DRUGS & CRIME, GLOBAL REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS 60 (2009), http://www.unodc.org/documents/Global_Report_on_TIP.pdf [hereinafter UNODC GLOBAL REPORT (2009)]. In the United States, men, women and children are trafficked into the country from all over the world. Trafficking occurs not only internationally and trans-continentally or cross-border, but it also presents domestically within the country. Id. See also Devin Brewer, Globalization and Human Trafficking, TOPICAL RES. DIGEST: HUM. RTS. AND HUM. TRAFFICKING, at 46, http://www.du.edu/korbel/hrhw/researchdigest/trafficking/Globalization.pdf (last visited Dec. 26, 2017) [hereinafter “Brewer”]. In the United States, men, women and children are trafficked into the country from all over the world. Trafficking occurs not only internationally and trans-continentally or cross-border, but it also presents domestically within the country.

3 UNODC GLOBAL REPORT (2009), supra note 2, at 6; see also Brewer, supra note 2.

4 The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, occurring between the 15th century until the end of the 19th
The globalization seen through colonization and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade has enabled human trafficking to exist at the level at which it does today.\(^5\) It is estimated that approximately 20.9 million people have been involved or victimized by forced labor or trafficking practices.\(^6\) The phenomenon of human trafficking, as we understand it today was first brought to the attention of the world in the 1990s, at a time when traffickers were able to take advantage of “transparent borders,” increased modes of communication, and “political and economic upheaval.”\(^7\) These conditions lead to the displacement and migration of large groups of people.\(^8\) As the world increasingly models itself around a “global community” and a “global economy,” the voluntary movement of peoples has increased and so too has the involuntary and coerced movements of people.\(^9\)

The economic incentives of trafficking also contribute to its persistence. Today, human trafficking occurs virtually everywhere in the world.\(^10\) It crosses borders when victims move between source,\(^11\) transit\(^12\) and...
destination countries. Human trafficking operates on a system of supply and demand, made possible by the inequalities and vulnerabilities which exist between successful and unsuccessful countries in the world market. As there are high profits (150-billion-dollars annually), and relatively few arrests and convictions, traffickers have little incentive to leave this business. Trafficking is a clear example of how globalization, which is inextricably linked to the world economy, has served to increase the prevalence of systems of subjugation and exploitation through slavery.

Source countries and destination countries are equally culpable for the

13 “Destination countries are the last link in the human trafficking chain. These countries receive trafficking victims and are generally more economically prosperous than origin countries. Destination countries can support a large commercial sex industry or a forced labor industry . . . .” Id.

14 Clark, supra note 1 (“Primary countries of demand include Western Europe, North America and parts of the Middle East and Southeast Asia.”).

15 Brewer, supra note 2, at 46-47. It is necessary to acknowledge that not all trafficking is due to economic inequality between countries, as there is a large number of vulnerable people who are trafficked and exploited domestically. However, there is a prevailing ideology that many victims who fall prey to traffickers are those who are of vulnerable populations who attempt to leave their home countries for the promise of upward economic mobility in destination countries. The isolation and vulnerability of these victims helps contribute to them being targeted for trafficking. See Clark, supra note 1 (discussing the profile of some female victims of trafficking); see also Comparison, infra note 186 (detailing how source and destination countries map onto Tier 1-3 country designations); see also TIP Report (2016), infra note 18 (discussing vulnerable populations).


17 Due to the criminal, secretive nature of human trafficking, victims are often hidden in brothels, homes, and businesses. Moreover, law enforcement, social workers, healthcare professionals, and other authorities rarely encounter victims of human trafficking, both because they are frequently unaware of how to identify potential victims and because victims are intentionally kept out of sight. Even if victims do come into contact with law enforcement or social services, they are usually reluctant to ask for help, partly as a result of psychological coercion but also because they fear retribution from the trafficker.


[A] common factor across all forms of modern slavery is the victims’ vulnerability to exploitation. Systemic social, cultural, and economic policies or practices may marginalize or discriminate against individuals and groups because they are poor, are intellectually or physically disabled, or because of their gender or ethnicity . . . . Traffickers exploit these disadvantages. They prey on those who lack security and opportunity, coerce or deceive them to gain control, and then profit from their compelled service.

Id.
persistence of trafficking. If the demand for vulnerable populations disappears in destination countries, traffickers in supply countries will no longer be incentivized to continue trafficking practices; similarly, if suppliers are impeded from providing victims, traffickers in destination countries will have to look elsewhere or will become obsolete. A recognition of this transactional relationship seems to be absent from the main anti-trafficking legislative and enforcement schemes promulgated by both the U.N. and the United States. This Note will first analyze the mechanisms behind the enforcement of international trafficking laws and agreements which have, to a large extent, been disseminated by the United Nations and the United States. Specifically, this Note seeks to demonstrate how the use of sanctions by the United States, enacted in an effort to make adherence to international anti-trafficking norms compulsory, creates unpredictable standards for compliance and simultaneously disadvantages source countries.

This Note will then look to anti-trafficking compliance in the Caribbean and specifically Guyana, to show why source and transition countries continue to struggle to meet international anti-trafficking goals. It will further demonstrate why the current legal framework, the enforcement of the Palermo Protocol through the Trafficking in Victims Protection Act, is not effective, and in fact undermines the goal of international collaboration.

II. HUMAN TRAFFICKING LAWS AND COMPLIANCE

Both the United Nations and the United States of America have codified clear regulations for the criminalization and suppression of human trafficking. Although many countries have been working towards

19 See Clark, supra note 1; see also Majeed A. Rahman, Human Trafficking in the era of Globalization: The case of Trafficking in the Global Market Economy, 2 TRANSIENCE J., no. 1, 2011, at 54, 58 (2011), https://www2.hu-berlin.de/transcience/Vol2_Issue1_2011_54_71_Glossary.pdf ("The 2005 US Department of State Report projected that human trafficking is one the fastest growing organized crimes after arms and drug trade."). "On the supply side . . . social, economic as well as political realities in source countries make the trafficking in persons easy . . . both 'structural' and proximal' factors in the home countries have contributed in fostering the movement of people from the source, to the destination countries." Id. at 61. See Brewer, supra note 2, at 47 (suggesting that "the lesser developed countries of the world have become the factories and workshops for the developed countries," providing the conditions necessary for trafficking to flourish in these countries); see also Jones et al., supra note 17, at 113 ("Countries that are prone to political unrest, or have weak or corrupt infrastructures combined with widespread poverty, are breeding grounds for international criminal networks.").

20 The United States, a self-labeled, Tier 1 country is a destination country to which 15,000 to 50,000 victims are trafficked each year. Jones et al., supra note 17.


22 See generally Lindsey King, International Law and Human Trafficking, TOPICAL RES. DIGEST:
compliance with these regulations, more needs to be done to eradicate human trafficking. The following protocols, though a step toward the goal of ending human trafficking, are incomplete in their application.

A. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, (“Palermo Protocol” or simply “Protocol”), was adopted in 2000 by the United Nations and became effective in 2003. At its adoption, the Protocol was commended for providing the international community with the tools and language necessary to finally combat and hopefully end human trafficking. Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Palermo Protocol is that it provided nations with a definition for human trafficking. This definition helps nations to better recognize human trafficking, but the Palermo Protocol is not without flaws.

The Protocol instructs state parties to create procedures to criminalize persons who participate in human trafficking. The Protocol “requires a
comprehensive international approach in countries of origin, transit and destination” and calls for the implementation of “measures to prevent such trafficking.”32 The Protocol further requires that “[e]ach State Party shall adopt such legislative and other measures as may be necessary to establish as criminal offences [actions of human trafficking], when committed internationally.”33 These offences are to include, the perpetration of human trafficking,34 aiding in the commission of human trafficking,35 and inducing others to participate in human trafficking.36

The Palermo Protocol emphasizes holding accountable those perpetrating, participating, and directing others to perpetrate or participate in human trafficking.37 Yet the actual mechanics of how state parties should implement its directives in their respective states remains unclear. In relevant parts, Article 9 of the Palermo Protocol gives extensive yet vague prevention and cooperation guidelines for party states to follow. The Protocol calls for “comprehensive policies, programmes and other measures”38 to “prevent and combat trafficking in persons; and [t]o protect victims . . . from re-victimization.”39 The United Nations intended this to be achieved through various platforms including coordination between research institutions, the media, and Non-Governmental Organizations.40 Most specifically, in Article 9(3) and (4), the Protocol calls for States parties to “take or strengthen measures through bilateral or multilateral cooperation”41 in an attempt to protect vulnerable populations and

34 Id. at art. 5, ¶ 2(a) (“Subject to basic concepts of its legal system, attempting to commit an offence established in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article.”).
35 Id. at art. 5, ¶ 2(b) (“Participating as an accomplice in an offence established in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article.”).
36 Id. at art. 5, ¶ 2(c) (“Organizing or directing other persons to commit an offense established in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article.”).
39 Id. at art. 9, ¶ 1(a)-(b).
40 “States Parties shall endeavour to undertake measures such as research, information and mass media campaigns and social and economic initiatives to prevent and combat trafficking in persons.” Id. at art. 9, ¶ 2. “Policies, programmes and other measures established in accordance with this article shall, as appropriate, include cooperation with non-governmental organizations, other relevant organizations and other elements of civil society.” Id. at art. 9, ¶ 3.
41 Id. at art. 9, ¶ 4 (“States Parties shall take or strengthen measures, including through bilateral or multilateral cooperation, to alleviate the factors that make persons, especially women and children, vulnerable to trafficking, such as poverty, underdevelopment and lack of equal opportunity.”) (emphasis added).
“discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons.” 42

The Palermo Protocol, while expansive in its approach, lacks specific, strategic steps for countries to take, providing only a generalized framework for the multilateralism or international cooperation that the United Nations desires.43 While recognizing that the problem of trafficking needs to be addressed in both source44 and destination countries45 simultaneously, the Palermo Protocol fails to provide guidelines for the specific trafficking problems facing individual countries as sources or destinations for trafficking.46 The absence of concrete guidelines contributes to the difficulty countries face when attempting to adequately comply with the aims of the Palermo Protocol.47

B. Compliance With The Palermo Protocol.

At its inception, the Palermo Protocol was seen as an overwhelming success in its ability to bring concerns about human trafficking to the forefront of international law.48 Early in the process, however, the Palermo Protocol was only seen as a stepping stone toward the universal adoption and implementation of anti-human trafficking laws.49 As previously discussed, the Protocol successfully established a widely accepted and sufficiently broad definition of trafficking.50 Nevertheless, that definition has been critiqued as “unworkable when applied to nation state legislation” for its lack of uniformity in prosecutorial systems throughout the world.51
One critique of the Palermo Protocol’s applicability to individual nation-states comes from its failure to recognize that the efforts, which had been made to combat human trafficking in the time predating the Protocol, were state-centered in their approach. Because the Protocol focused on international norms, and did not adequately address how preexisting enforcement systems directed at domestic trafficking ought to be included within the international framework, it did not act as a complete enough measure to eradicate trafficking.\textsuperscript{52} The Protocol reflects the belief that “globalization has largely facilitated human trafficking while accordingly serving to impede counter-trafficking efforts” and therefore, “[s]tate-centered approaches to combat trafficking are proving obsolete and futile since human trafficking knows no state boundaries.”\textsuperscript{53}

Those who support a global response believe the ineffectiveness of human trafficking efforts following the enactment of the Palermo Protocol persist because of its slow ratification in nation states, and because the Protocol was not given the “teeth” necessary for an easy or effective implementation.\textsuperscript{54} The Trafficking Victims Prevention Act’s\textsuperscript{55} system of sanctions is believed to be the necessary encouragement required for nation states to enact and enforce laws addressing human trafficking.\textsuperscript{56} Yet, there are understandable concerns about situating the United States as the sole authority for the enforcement of international trafficking law.\textsuperscript{57}

\textbf{C. Trafficking in Victims Protection Act and the Sanctions System}

In 2000, just before the UN General Assembly adopted the Palermo Protocol, the United States adopted the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA”).\textsuperscript{58} TVPA is the United States’ distinct contribution to the

\textsuperscript{52} Id. (“The Protocol succeeded in creating a definition of trafficking that was broad enough to address most international trafficking and some domestic trafficking, although the implementation of this definition in various nation states required a more narrow domestic definition of trafficking than what the Protocol offered.”).

\textsuperscript{53} Brewer, supra note 2, at 47.

\textsuperscript{54} See Shoaps, supra note 23, at 960.

\textsuperscript{55} See TVPA (2000), infra note 58.

\textsuperscript{56} Shoaps, supra note 23, at 959 (“While the TVPA is by no means a flawless mechanism for handling the problem of human trafficking, its sanctions regime has the potential to encourage nation states throughout the world to enact their own domestic laws addressing human trafficking.”).

\textsuperscript{57} In assuming such extraterritorial reach, the United States has proclaimed itself global sheriff on trafficking. This raises grave concerns both as a matter of international law and as a matter of global anti-trafficking strategy. A powerful but blunt weapon for influencing the behavior of other states, unilateral sanctions have long been criticized as inconsistent with international law and ineffective in practice. The TVPA sanctions regime invites more of the same criticism. Chuang, supra note 21, at 439.

\textsuperscript{58} Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-386, 114 Stat. 1464
international attempt to combat human trafficking\(^{59}\) by criminalizing trafficking in the United States and serving as a mechanism to curb trafficking internationally.\(^{60}\) TVPA sets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and imposes a sanctions system to hold nations accountable to these standards.\(^{61}\)

Similarly to the Palermo Protocol, the TVPA minimum standards provide that nations ought to punish severe forms of trafficking.\(^{62}\) The TVPA specifically states that “the knowing commission of any act of sex trafficking”\(^{63}\) needs to be met in a sufficiently severe manner that “adequately reflects the heinous nature of the offense,”\(^{64}\) and calls for “[t]he government of the country [to] make serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons.”\(^{65}\) The TVPA creates a tiered system, ranking the effectiveness of countries that receive economic assistance through the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961\(^{66}\) on their efforts to comply with these minimum standards.\(^{67}\) The tier system, as set out by the TVPA and expanded upon in the annual Trafficking in Persons Report (“TIP Report”),\(^{68}\) ranks nations in one of four tiers which indicate the extent

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59 Shoaps, supra note 23.
60 Shoaps, supra note 23, at 968.
61 See TVPA (2000), supra note 58, §111; see also Shoaps, supra note 23, at 935.
62 TVPA (2000), supra note 58, §108(a)(1) (“The government of the country should prohibit severe forms of trafficking in persons and punish acts of such trafficking.”).
63 This includes sex trafficking by “force, fraud, coercion, or in which the victim of sex trafficking is a child . . . or of trafficking which includes rape or kidnapping or which causes a death . . . .” Id. §108(a)(2).
64 Id. §108(a)(3) (“For the knowing commission of any act of a severe form of trafficking in persons, the government of the country should prescribe punishment that is sufficiently stringent to deter and that adequately reflects the heinous nature of the offense.”).
65 Id. §108(a)(4).
67 See TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 36; see also, TVPA (2000), supra note 58, at §108.
68 The annual Trafficking in Persons report is a publication of the results of the United States’ inquiries into how well member nations are complying with the minimum standards of the TVPA. See
of that nation’s government action or inaction toward eliminating trafficking.90 Rather than basing the results “on the size of the country’s problem, . . . [the TVPA looks to] the extent of the governments’ efforts measured against the TVPA’s minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking.”70

The TVPA’s sanction system operates through the United States’ policy of refusing to give foreign assistance funds that are not based on humanitarian or trade-related needs to governments of certain nations that fail to meet minimum standards to combat human trafficking.71 The United States’ State Department assesses “any country with 100 or more trafficked persons per year,” compiling its findings into a report.72 These countries are categorized into four different tiers and the results of these inquiries are then published in the TIP Report.73

(1) Tier 1 “indicates that a government has acknowledged the existence of human trafficking, has made efforts to address the

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69 TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 36.
70 Id. (describing these minimum standards as “generally consistent with the Palermo Protocol”).
71 TVPA (2000), supra note 58, §110 (“It is the policy of the United States not to provide nonhumanitarian, nontrade-related foreign assistance to any government that - (1) does not comply with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; and (2) is not making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with such standards.”). The Tier system, which is implemented by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (OMCTP), looks to the following factors to make determinations:

1. Enactment of laws prohibiting severe forms of trafficking . . . and provision of criminal punishments for trafficking offenses; criminal penalties prescribed for human trafficking offenses with a maximum of at least four years’ deprivation of liberty, or a more severe penalty; implementation of human trafficking laws through vigorous prosecution . . . and sentencing of offenders; proactive victim identification measures . . . government funding and partnerships with NGOs to provide victims [services] . . . victim protection efforts . . . the extent to which a government ensures victims are provided with legal and other assistance . . . voluntary repatriation and reintegration of victims; government measures to prevent trafficking . . . [and] government efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts and international sex tourism.

72 Chuang, supra note 21, at 452.
73 Id. (“The State Department bases its country assessments on data compiled from a wide range of sources, including U.S. embassies, foreign government officials, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), individuals, and published reports.”). Countries are assessed by the U.S. minimum standards as follows:

1. The government should prohibit and punish acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons.
2. For sex trafficking involving force, fraud, coercion, or in which the victim is a child, or of trafficking which involves rape, kidnapping or death, the government should prescribe punishment commensurate with that for grave crimes. (3) For the knowing commission of any act of a severe form of trafficking, the government should prescribe punishment that is stringent enough to deter and that reflects the heinous nature of the offense. (4) The government should make serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons.

Id. at 453.
problem, and meets the TVPA’s minimum standards.”

(2) Tier 2 indicates the “governments of countries that do not fully meet the TVPA’s minimum standards.”

(3) The Tier 2 Watch-List is reserved for governments who would ordinarily be given a Tier 2 designation but “the absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing.” The watch-list is often reserved for those countries in which there is a failure by the government to show new or renewed efforts to combat trafficking from previous years.

(4) Tier 3 is reserved for the “governments of countries that do not fully meet the TVPA’s minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.” In addition, countries that receive a Tier 3 ranking must become compliant, with the help of TIP, within 90 days or else they risk being sanctioned. Sanctions in this case mean that in addition to the withholding of aid from the United States, “the U.S. President reserves the authority to direct the heads of international financial institutions... to deny nonhumanitarian, non-trade-related and non-human rights-related assistance.”

According to the 2016 TIP Report, 149 states fell into the Tier 2 category or below, and twenty-seven of those were Tier 3 status. Only thirty-six
countries met the Tier 1 standards, representing approximately twenty-percent of all member nations. This suggests that only twenty-percent of participating nations have made sufficient progress toward Tier 1 status. Tier 1 status does not indicate the eradication of the problem of human trafficking, only that there has been a continuous demonstration of progress. Progress is a fluid term and the tier system is continually evolving, making the standard flexible. Countries are required to show a certain level of improvement in their efforts to combat trafficking each year to maintain their pre-existing tier ranking. A higher level of improvement would be necessary for upward mobility.

Despite the necessary function that the TVPA’s sanction and tier system serves, its application is not entirely effective or consistent with the Palermo Protocol. Many of TVPA’s standards are vague and fluid in that they do not set out clear goals for nation states to attain a certain Tier Status. This lack of predictability has been further compounded by the fact that the TVPA’s definition of sex trafficking conflicts with that of the Palermo Protocol by broadly including all prostitution as involuntary sex work. Additionally, the fluidity and vagueness of the Tier System’s standards has disproportionately benefited economically rich destination countries by granting them Tier 1 status, while the gap between Tier 1 and lower tier countries only appears to widen, placing the sole responsibility for human trafficking on Tier 2 and Tier 3 countries.

Id. Twenty-seven countries remain at the Tier 3 ranking, and 3 countries were deemed special cases. Id. The TIP report contains state parties that are not parties to the Palermo Protocol, these are, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Comoros, Republic of Congo, Fiji, Iran, Japan, Korea, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Nepal, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Tonga, Uganda, and Yemen. Id. at 19.

82 TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 56.
83 Id.
84 TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 36.
85 Id.
86 Id.
87 Chuang, supra note 21, at 439-40.
88 See supra notes 73-86 and accompanying text (discussing the TVPA Tier system).
89 See generally Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 80-82.

The TVPA’s “war on human trafficking” gathers strength from the UN Trafficking Protocol that supplements the 2000 Convention on Transnational Organised Crime. However, it differs from the UN Protocol in that it views “prostitution and any related activities, including pimping, pandering, and/or maintaining brothels as contributing to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons.” Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 82; In 2008 the TVPA was amended through the adoption of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection and Reauthorization Act of 2008 (TVPRA 2008) Pub. L. No: 110-457. In Section 106 of the amendment, the TVPRA 2008 adds a requirement that a government “has made serious and sustained efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts; and participation in international sex tourism by nationals of the country.” See Pub. L. 110-457 §106(2)(D).

See also Chuang, supra note 21, at 442-43 (discussing how the Palermo Protocol drafting sessions became a battle ground surrounding multiple issues, one of which was “whether trafficking should encompass ‘voluntary’ prostitution”).

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trafficking on Tier 3 nation states rather than addressing it through a collaborative framework.\textsuperscript{90}

III. TRAFFICKING IN THE CARIBBEAN AND GUYANA

Following the implementation of the TVPA, the Caribbean’s efforts to combat human trafficking have been brought into new focus.\textsuperscript{91} With support from international organizations such as the International Organization of Migration (“IOM”) and regional organizations such as Organization of American States, the Association of Caribbean States and the Caribbean Community (“CARICOM”), there have been efforts to make combating human trafficking in the area a priority.\textsuperscript{92} This initiative is particularly important because Caribbean countries, including Guyana,\textsuperscript{93} have struggled

\textsuperscript{90}See infra note 186 and accompanying text and images; see also Chuang, supra note 21, at 446-47, 482-88 (suggesting that tier rank can be politically motivated rather than solely based on anti-trafficking initiatives taken by member states). Chuang suggests that the use of unilateral sanctions would undermine international cooperation. Chuang, supra note 21, at 456-57.

\textsuperscript{91}See SEELKE, supra note 1, at 8-13 (stating that NGO efforts to combat human trafficking in the region date back to 1994).

\textsuperscript{92}Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 80-81. “[IOM’s] efforts to combat TIP began in 1994 . . . [and] include efforts to increase public awareness of human trafficking through education and information campaigns, build government capabilities to identify and assist victims.” SEELKE, supra note 1, at 12.

\textsuperscript{93}Guyana is considered to be part of the “Greater Caribbean.” See John Packer & Richard Scott,
to comply with the TVPA given their vulnerability to trafficking.94

Focusing on the application of international human trafficking law in the Caribbean and Guyana is enlightening for two reasons. Firstly, the region’s history and memory of the illegal transportation of peoples through the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade continues to be a salient backdrop for human trafficking in the Caribbean and has produced uniquely vulnerable groups susceptible to trafficking in the region.95 Secondly, because countries in the Caribbean are typically source, transit, and destination countries, the region faces a unique challenge in reaching TVPA compliance.96 Although the response to trafficking sanctions have been varied in Caribbean countries, Guyana has been one of the most compliant countries with the guidelines given by the United States.97

A. The Caribbean


94 TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 74. Most Caribbean countries are ranked Tier 2 or below. SeeK, supra note 1, at 17-18.

95 “What is likened to the Atlantic slave trade turns out, in the Caribbean region, to be akin to the conditions that followed slavery. It is the similarities with contracted and bonded labour in the nineteenth-century Caribbean that are pertinent for discussions today.” Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 83.

96 Caribbean countries are often labeled as source and transit countries but are also destination countries for many victims as well. See TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 85-86, 90-92, 156-58, 189-92, 216-17, 320-25, 372-73 (discussing the Bahamas, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago).

Cuba has been consistently placed in Tier 3 and is therefore continuously on the list of sanctioned countries. The Cuban authorities, it is claimed in the annual US Trafficking in Persons (TIP) reports, ‘do not admit to the existence of a problem of human trafficking’.

Guyana, Suriname, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Belize and Jamaica have also all been ranked negatively at various times.
Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 80.

Cuba, however, has been moved to the Tier 2 Watch List in 2015 and 2016. TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 56.

97 Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 80 (“Responses to such rankings [tier 2 watch-list and tier 3] have varied from defiance to full complicity . . . [with] [t]he Guyanese government [proving] to be one of the most compliant with the US’s demands.”).
“Human smuggling, especially the trafficking of women and children, is one of the most sordid features of population movements in the contemporary Caribbean.”98 The Caribbean is uniquely impacted by trafficking for many reasons. Factors contributing to trafficking in this region include its dependence on tourism,100 the geography of the region,101 as well as social and economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and membership in an indigenous group.102 Specifically, its isolated location, tourism, and sex tourism have contributed to trafficking problems in the area.103

The Caribbean’s “culture of migration”104 has also contributed to the trafficking problems in the region.105 This mobile mentality has permeated the area since “the emancipation of slaves in the Caribbean,”106 leading to an unintended consequence – the creation of a population of migrants.107

98 Sometimes also referred to as voluntary trafficking. Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, Human Trafficking in the Context of Caribbean Labor Migration, in INTRA-CARIBBEAN MIGRATION AND THE CONFLICT NEXUS 130, 131 (Taryn Lesser et al. eds., 2006) (“Persons who are voluntarily trafficked include those motivated by a desire to migrate at almost any cost, as well as those motivated by a desire to engage in a particular type of activity or employment for which recruitment by traffickers provides such an opportunity.”) [hereinafter “Thomas-Hope”]. The TVPA typically does not address this type of trafficking but may in some instances equate voluntary trafficking with human trafficking. It is certainly possible for someone who was initially voluntarily trafficked to become a victim of involuntary trafficking. Id. at 133.

99 Tom Durbin & Jill St. George, Human Trafficking in Barbados: Achievements and Continuing Hurdles, 38 J. OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STUD. 126, 128 (2013), http://crimeobservatory.bz/docstation/com_docstation/24/human_trafficking_in_barbados.pdf. Many of the statistics on how much human trafficking has impacted the Caribbean also include Latin America due to the small size of the areas in question, which is often due to the overall interconnectivity of trafficking routes in the area. Id. The NGO, “Free the Slaves” estimated that over 1.3 million people have been victims of trafficking or enslaved in Latin America and the Caribbean. Id. In 2009, the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimated that a minimum of 250,000 people were engaged in forced labor or sexual exploitation in the area due to human trafficking. Id.

100 Id. at 129. “In general, states tend to have a high dependence on one or two income sources, with the predominant source of income being tourism. In the Caribbean . . . one quarter of all employment . . . is held in the tourism sector.” Id. “[U]nemployment leads to a potentially higher number of victims. In addition, it is reported that a growing amount of tourism in the Caribbean is sex tourism. The Dutch Antilles and the Dominican Republic are widely reported as being ‘sex tourism’ destinations, along with Brazil and Colombia in Latin America.” Id.

101 Id. at 129-30.
102 Id. at 130-31.
103 Id. at 129-31.
104 Thomas-Hope, supra note 98, at 131.
105 Id. “[T]he Caribbean demonstrates the particular ways in which globalization and international capital impacts human movement.” Id. at 134.
106 Id. at 131.
107 Id. Migration, for many in the region, is seen as a social good and a means of upward mobility. Many participate in legal and productive migration programs in job sectors such as agriculture, nursing, and education, where source and destination countries have maintained open communication with one another. Id. at 134-36.
“[G]enerations of people [have come] to rely on migration as the means of circumventing the constraints of a deeply stratified societal system [due, in part, to the slave trade] and the limitations of small size and poor economies.”

Movement in the Caribbean is synonymous with escaping entrenched social norms, resulting in an eagerness of people within the Caribbean to move to a new location that is offering opportunity. This eagerness can also exploit those in the most vulnerable situations, exposing them to the risk of trafficking, with the most vulnerable populations in the Caribbean being women and girls.

One problem with the application of United States TVPA standards to trafficking in the Caribbean, specifically sex trafficking, stems from the fact that the TVPA does not map directly onto the Palermo Protocol. The TVPA “views ‘prostitution and any related activities, including pimping, pandering, and/or maintaining brothels as contributing to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons.’” The U.N. definition, in contrast, recognizes two types of prostitution. One is a result of free choice and the other is a result of coercion. The distinction between these policies is incredibly meaningful in the Caribbean because it demonstrates how the definitional difference put forth by the United States is overbroad in its application to countries with legalized sex work, equating those countries with others that are complicit with human trafficking instead of acknowledging the

108 Id. at 131.
109 Id. at 131-32.
110 Id.
111 See Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 81. “Individual risk factors include poverty, unemployment, membership in an indigenous group, illiteracy, a history of physical or sexual abuse, homelessness, drug use, and gang membership.” Seelke, supra note 1, at 4. “While trafficking for forced labor is a serious problem in Latin America and the Caribbean, trafficking for sexual exploitation has, until recently, been perceived as a more widespread and pressing regional problem. Most victims are trafficked for prostitution, but others are used for pornography and stripping.” Id. at 5.
112 Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 82.
113 Id.
114 Seelke, supra note 1, at 14.
115 Id.
116 The current U.N. definition of TIP assumes that there are at least two different types of prostitution, one of which is the result of free choice to participate in the prostitution business and one that is the result of coercion, vulnerability, deception, or other pressures. Of these, only the latter type is considered TIP. . . Several groups in the United States have sought to redefine TIP to include all prostitution, but many countries have rejected those attempts. Seelke, supra note 1, at 14-15.
118 “The equation of trafficking with prostitution in the trafficking discourse renders sexual labour as coerced labour and, as such, misrepresents sexual agency.” Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 83.
existence of consensual sexual markets.117

B. Guyana’s Trafficking Landscape: Success and Failures

Guyana is no exception to the TIP Report conclusion for the Caribbean’s treatment of human trafficking. More needs to be done in the Caribbean to comply with the TVPA.118 While Guyana has been one of the most compliant countries in its attempt to conform to the guidelines set forth by the TVPA,119 its history has not been without marked failure.120

Guyana is a unique locale for human trafficking in the Caribbean as it is both “a source and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor.”121 The trafficking that occurs within Guyana involves not only domestic trafficking routes but also cross-border routes.122 “Women and children from Guyana,”123 Panama,124 Peru,125 Bolivia,126 Suriname,127 and Venezuela128 are trafficked to mining areas in the urban and interior areas of Guyana,129 while people from

117 Id. at 83-84.
119 Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 80; see also TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 85-86, 90-92, 156-58, 189-92, 216-17, 320-25, 372-73 (discussing the Bahamas, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago).
121 TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 189.
122 Id. “Whether about Cuba, Jamaica, Belize, Suriname or Guyana, the US Department of State claims that the main problem is either internal or cross-border movements of women and girls for the ’purpose of sexual exploitation.’” Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 81.
123 See TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 189; see also SafeTV2 Headline News, Trafficking in Person Reported Cases are High in Guyana, YOUTUBE (July 22, 2016), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZgHgnYhqJk [hereinafter “Reported Cases are High in Guyana (2016)”].
124 TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 298 (“Panamanian women are vulnerable to sex trafficking in other countries, including The Bahamas and Guyana.”).
125 Id. at 35 (“Peruvian girls are subjected to sex trafficking in mining and logging areas in Peru, and women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking near gold mines in Suriname and Guyana.”).
126 Id.
127 Id. at 189; see also Reported Cases are High in Guyana (2016), supra note 123.
129 Id.
Guyana are trafficked to Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Like the Caribbean, Guyana is attractive to traffickers due to its isolating landscape and intense social stratification. Through the memory of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Guyana has suffered from a long history of slavery followed by indentured servitude, which has created many ethnic and economically disadvantaged minorities who are vulnerable to trafficking. Additionally, Guyana’s location as a bridge between South America and Caribbean countries makes it a location of increased migration, with Guyana predominately sending its migrant populations to other Caribbean countries. Its landscape of urban areas on the coast, sparsely inhabited forest, and mining inlands create zones of minimal government oversight. When viewed together, these conditions make

130 Id. at 74 (“Antigua and Barbuda is a destination and transit country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. Legal and undocumented immigrants from the Caribbean region, notably from Jamaica, Guyana, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, as well as from Southeast Asia, are most vulnerable to trafficking.”).
131 Id. at 90 (“Barbados is a source and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. Authorities and NGOs report foreign women have been forced into prostitution in Barbados. Foreigners are subjected to forced labor in Barbados, most notably in domestic service, agriculture, and construction.”).
132 Id. at 189. “Legal and undocumented immigrants from Jamaica and Guyana are especially vulnerable to trafficking.” Id. at 90.
133 Id. at 372.
134 Trinidad and Tobago is a destination, transit, and source country for adults and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. Women and girls from the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Venezuela, and Colombia are subjected to sex trafficking in brothels and clubs, often lured by offers of legitimate employment . . . [e]conomic migrants from the Caribbean region, especially Guyana, and from Asia, in particular those lacking legal status, are vulnerable to forced labor in domestic service and the retail sector.
135 “Traffickers are attracted to Guyana’s interior mining communities where there is limited government control, but Guyanese and foreign nationals are also vulnerable to trafficking in urban centers and elsewhere in the country’ . . . Guyanese nationals are also subjected to human trafficking in other countries in the Caribbean region.” KAIEITEUR, supra note 120.
136 “The opportunistic use of Guyana’s indigenous hinterland communities in the debate on human trafficking deepens the distance between the peoples of the coast and the hinterland, further entrenching the geo-racialised relations of dominance within the country.” Kempado, supra note 4, at 83.
138 “[I]ndividuals around the world suffer extreme hardship or violence, experience discrimination, or face social marginalization . . . [and] human traffickers take advantage of such circumstances. Indeed, exploitation appears even more likely when a confluence of such circumstances besets particular communities. The cumulative effects can make certain populations . . . especially vulnerable to human trafficking.” TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 20.
139 Berta Fernández-Allaro & Gerard Pascua, Migration Management Challenges in the Caribbean, in INTRA-CARIBBEAN MIGRATION AND THE CONFLICT NEXUS 70, 70 (Taryn Lesser et al. eds., 2006).
140 See Ashley Garrett & Amy Mahoney, Scope and Nature of the Trafficking Phenomenon: A
Guyana particularly vulnerable to trafficking.

In 2003, “[y]oung Amerindian women found working in sex trade far from their home communities were held up as victims and a national effort to save them was designed,” demonstrating that the government of Guyana had begun taking steps to combat human trafficking. Following this effort, Guyana became one of the first countries in the region to follow the United States’ example by enacting domestic laws against trafficking in persons, and on September 14, 2004, Guyana acceded to the Palermo Protocol. These efforts to conform to international norms moved Guyana up from its Tier 3 status, and Guyana became a “deserving nation” in the eyes of the State Department.

However, in the years since 2003, Guyana has had a relationship fraught with success and failure in regards to the TVPA tier system, fluctuating between Tier 2 and the Tier 2 Watch List, but never achieving Tier 1 status.

Regional Perspective, in INTRA-CARIBBEAN MIGRATION AND THE CONFLICT NEXUS 147, 154 (Taryn Lesser et al. eds., 2006) (discussing how Guyana’s internal movement from rural hinterlands to urban coastal areas, and from urban to rural movements to work in mining, can impede the identification of trafficking); see also TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 35, 189. Even when government oversight is available, some Guyanese police officers are complicit in trafficking crimes, making efforts to minimize trafficking in the country even more difficult to execute. Id.

141 Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 80. Kempadoo, makes many arguments that challenge the way in which we conceptualize the sexual labor of Caribbean women in the context of human trafficking, human rights, and international feminism agendas. “Ideologies about the traffic of persons today are couched in various feminist and human rights discourses, yet continue to rest on moral indignation about violations of womanhood and support ‘migration-management’ policies and tighter border controls, greater policing of (im)migrant and Third World populations and rescue missions in sex industries.” Id. at 82. It is my hope is that this Note does not replicate this common treatment of human trafficking issues.

142 Id. at 80.
143 Id.
144 Treaty Series, supra note 27.
145 Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 80. Guyana enacted the Trafficking in Persons Act of 2005, which prohibits all forms of trafficking and imposes stringent penalties ranging from short term imprisonment to life imprisonment. TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 189.

of the State Department. In recent years, 2013 through 2015 in particular, marked some of the worst rankings for Guyana’s compliance as Guyana consistently was ranked “Tier 2 Watch List.” The criticism found in 2013 TIP Report soured the relationship between countries, despite Guyana’s history of attempted compliance. This led to Guyana’s Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking in Persons (MTFTIP) to state that “the Government of Guyana wishes to make it clear that in the future it will not be completing and returning questionnaires on trafficking in persons to the US authorities,” further stating that the report was not only inaccurate but misrepresented human trafficking in Guyana.

Regardless of whether the United States overstated the problem and did not give enough deference to the efforts made by Guyana or only sought to highlight a growing and unacknowledged problem within Guyana, this breakdown of constructive coordination between the two countries

148 KAIETEUR, supra note 120 ("The Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking in Persons (MTFTIP) had expressed deep concern that the 2013 US State Department’s Report on TIP in Guyana has not reviewed Guyana fairly.").

149 See figures in supra note 147.

150 THE DAILY OBSERVER, supra note 120 (stating the United States has been critical of Guyana’s attempts at combatting its trafficking problem). See also U.S. DEP’T OF STATE, TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT 186-87 (2013),  https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/210739.pdf  [Hereinafter “TIP Report (2013)"].

151 Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 80 (describing the Guyanese government as “one of the most compliant with the US’s demands”).

152 KAIETEUR, supra note 120.

153 Id.; cf. Iana Seales, Human Trafficking and Official Neglect, STABROEK NEWS (Apr. 5, 2014), https://www.stabroeknews.com/2014/features/04/05/human-trafficking-official-neglect/ (claiming that the Guyanese government is willfully ignoring the problem of human trafficking when it is presented to them).
demonstrates just one way in which the TVPA system is failing. Overall, reported trafficking numbers in Guyana are relatively low as compared with its total population of 775,675. Yet, as evidenced through the TIP Reports (2013-2016), the United States has predominately focused its critiques around perceived government inactivity, specifically in trafficking prosecutions, prevention, and victims support, not on the size of the trafficking problem at hand.

In the time since these failures, the landscape has changed dramatically, as the TIP Reports continue to be handed down from the Department of State. In May of 2015, Simonna Broomes, an advocate against human trafficking who was honored as a TIP Hero by the United States Government in June of 2013, was named as a Minister in the Ministry of Social Protection to further Guyana’s efforts to comply with TIP. During 2015, the Guyanese government investigated “15 trafficking cases involving 56 victims, including 16 children, which resulted in seven prosecutions and one sex trafficking conviction.” In its conviction of a trafficker, Guyana imposed a three-year prison sentence and required the payment of restitution to the victim. In addition to the strides Guyana has made in prosecution over the last decade, the Guyanese government has sought to improve its victim support efforts by giving $600,000 Guyanese dollars (GYD) ($2,970) to an NGO-run shelter dedicated to trafficking.

154 “The basis for claims about human trafficking, however, remains dubious. Research, including that commissioned by the IOM, has produced little data and identified very few ‘trafficked victims.’” Kempadoo, supra note 4, at 83. See generally CLARE R. SEELKE & ALISON SISKIN, CONG. RESEARCH SERV., RL34317, TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS: U.S. POLICY AND ISSUES FOR CONGRESS 35 (2008), http://digitalcommons.lir.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1484&context=key_workplace [hereinafter “SEELKE & SISKIN”].


156 From 2013-2015, Guyana was on the Trafficking In Persons Report Tier 2 Watch List. See, TIP REPORT (2013), supra note 150, at 186 (stating that the government failed to prosecute high profile cases of trafficking, which “creates an enabling environment for continued human trafficking”); see also TIP REPORT (2014), supra note 147, at 153 (“[T]he government did not demonstrate evidence of overall increasing efforts to address human trafficking since the previous reporting period” and “failed to punish most traffickers with incarceration”); and see U.S. DEP’T OF STATE, TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT 175 (2015), https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/243559.pdf (”The government released its anti-trafficking action plan in June 2014; however, the government made uneven efforts to implement it during the reporting period. The government convicted only one trafficker – a police officer.”).


159 Id. (marking “the first time restitution had been ordered for a trafficking offender in Guyana”).

victims”\textsuperscript{161} in a clear attempt to honor the protection of victims that the TVPA calls for.\textsuperscript{162}

C. Recent Developments in Guyana's Treatment of Human Trafficking

The 2016 TIP Report points out that Guyana’s anti-trafficking unit for trafficking investigations was still severely understaffed and critiqued the Guyanese government for being susceptible to punishing trafficking victims for crimes committed due to being trafficked.\textsuperscript{163} Recommendations from the report included recommendations for Guyana to continue its investigations and prosecutions of sex and labor trafficking,\textsuperscript{164} the creation of better guidelines for identifying victims, specifically in the “police, health, immigration, labor, mining, and forestry” sectors,\textsuperscript{165} and the creation of additional protections for victims in the context of immigration and trauma support.\textsuperscript{166}

The response of the Guyanese Government today shows a rededication to the TVPA. Human trafficking cases have increased between 2015 and 2016, despite the previous governmental efforts to curb the practice.\textsuperscript{167} “Reported cases have climbed from 30 to 41 a 36.7 percent increase while the number of victims soared from 65 to 103 from 2015 to the first ten months of last year [2016], a spike of 58.5 percent.”\textsuperscript{168} Most of the victims recovered in Guyana were both Guyanese and non-nationals.\textsuperscript{169} Guyana’s new administration is intent on tackling it.\textsuperscript{170} “The government of Guyana today, is solving the problem and not suppressing bad news.”\textsuperscript{171}

Perhaps in an attempt to change the TIP Report’s perspective on

\textsuperscript{161} TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 189. The shelter is the only one of its kind. \textit{Id}. The donation was intended “to enhance the shelter’s psycho-social services for victims.” \textit{Id}. The government also “increased collaboration with anti-trafficking NGOs by instituting procedures to refer victims to the shelter . . . .” \textit{Id}.

\textsuperscript{162} See generally TVPA (2000), supra note 58; see also Palermo Protocol (2000), supra note 2.

\textsuperscript{163} TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 189.

\textsuperscript{164} \textit{Id}.

\textsuperscript{165} \textit{Id}.

\textsuperscript{166} \textit{Id}.


\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Id}; see also CARIBBEAN 360, supra note 120 (“Guyana recorded 40 TIP cases in 2014; a 47 per cent increase in 2015 and a 145 per cent increase in 2016. Of the 197 persons trafficked during the 2014-2016 period, 89 per cent were females and 89 percent were 32 years and younger.”).

\textsuperscript{169} CARIBBEAN 360, supra note 120 (“[N]on-nationals accounting for 41 per cent.”).

\textsuperscript{170} THE DAILY OBSERVER, supra note 120.

\textsuperscript{171} \textit{Id}. (Guyana . . . launched its latest offensive against human trafficking with President David Granger indicating that his administration is collaborating with other stakeholders to deal with the situation.”).
Guyana’s treatment of trafficking, on January 18, 2017, Guyana’s government launched a new initiative: the National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Response to Trafficking in Persons (2017-2018), with work to begin immediately.\textsuperscript{172} With little information released about the specifics of the plan, the overall impact of this new plan and how it will be implemented remains to be seen, but Guyanese officials appear optimistic in their ability to begin confronting trafficking head-on.\textsuperscript{173}

IV. PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As evidenced through the implementation of the TVPA sanction regime in the Caribbean, a dichotomy has emerged between the enforcement mechanism of the TVPA and the rhetoric associated with the global fight to end trafficking in persons.\textsuperscript{174} Throughout the literature and policies surrounding human trafficking, there has been a surge in reference to the need for multilateral cooperation.\textsuperscript{175} In fact, the Palermo Protocol specifically calls for a collaborative and “comprehensive international approach.”\textsuperscript{176} The TVPA, however, analyzes success on a state-by-state basis through the use of its unilateral sanctions.\textsuperscript{177} Use of these sanctions

\textsuperscript{172}Id.; see also CARIBBEAN 360, supra note 120.
\textsuperscript{174}See supra Section II and Section III (discussing the ways in which the TVPA has departed from the Palermo Protocol regarding sex work and discussing the TVPA’s enforcement impact through the sanction system).
\textsuperscript{175}James Scott, Multilateralism International Relations, ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA, https://www.britannica.com/topic/multilateralism (last visited Dec. 26, 2017) (defining multilateralism as a “process of organizing relations between groups of three or more states” compromising and working together to make meaningful change on a particular issue). The need for a multilateral approach is referenced in both the TVPA and in the UNODC report on Trafficking 2009, and it is highlighted as a necessary means to combat trafficking in the TIP Report 2016. See UNODC GLOBAL REPORT (2009), supra note 2, at 69 (stating that “[t]he first step in tackling a transnational issue must be information sharing . . . Tackling transnational trafficking in human beings requires an ongoing exchange of data”); see also TVPA (2000), supra note 58, §102(24).
\textsuperscript{176}PALERMO PROTOCOL (2000), supra note 2, at pmbl.
\textsuperscript{177}The use of unilateral economic sanctions has become a common foreign policy tool to alter state behavior, providing ‘a middle road response between diplomacy and military action.’ By far the most active sanctions proponent in the world, the United States has used unilateral sanctions to promote its foreign policy objectives, including combating nuclear proliferation, fighting trafficking in drugs and weapons, promoting democracy and human rights, and punishing territorial aggression.
undercuts the multilateral aspect of international human rights law because “[t]he ‘minimum standards’ by which the United States evaluates country performance are poorly articulated and inconsistently applied.”

Specifically, the United States advocates the adoption of legal norms that “employ selective (and sometimes misleading) references to the Palermo Protocol norms” which “export[s] U.S. domestic standards under the guise of universally applicable international norms.”

Many analysts have asserted that the overall impact of the Trafficking report and sanctions process depends upon the credibility of the State Department’s annual country TIP rankings. Some would argue that, although the TIP reports have improved with each year, “inconsistent application of the minimum standards [mandated by TVPA] and superficial country assessments have compromised their credibility.”

This is evidenced by the anger displayed by the Guyanese government in 2013 regarding what Guyana felt was their undeserved ranking on the Tier 2 Watch-List.

The most problematic aspect of the promulgation of U.S. domestic standards through unilateral sanctions is that these sanctions present a mechanism that may only serve to harm vulnerable populations within the sanctioned country rather than having a positive effect. Policies that have the potential to further disadvantage the intended beneficiaries should be closely examined. The threat of sanctions in this context must be carefully monitored when applied to economically disadvantaged countries such as those in the Caribbean. Additionally, the TIP Report Tier System is undeniably correlated with a country’s status as a source, transit, or destination country, in which countries that are source countries, either in part or exclusively, are ranked as lesser than destination countries.

Chuang, supra note 21, at 457. “In practice, the sanctions regime has inspired many governments to develop domestic laws and policies to combat trafficking. But whether these actions contribute positively to the global fight against trafficking should not be assumed.” Id. at 439.

178 Id. at 439.
179 Id. at 439-40.
180 Id. at 440.
181 SEELKE & SISKIN, supra note 154.
182 See supra Part III(B) (discussing the breakdown of TVPA relationships between Guyana and the United States).
183 Chuang, supra note 21, at 459 (“U.S. sanctions have resulted in the populations of the target countries, rather than their governments, suffering the consequent economic pain.”).
184 Id.
185 See supra notes 134-38 and accompanying text (detailing the vulnerabilities of Caribbean populations).
186 Note how the countries of origin or source countries map closely to the countries that have been
Therefore, the problems with the implementation of Palermo Protocol through the TVPA can be analyzed in two manners:

ranked as Tier 2, Tier 2 Watch List, and Tier 3, and those that are ranked at Tier 1 are closely correlated with those that are also destination countries [hereinafter “Comparison”].


(1) Under the current framework, supply countries, which are almost always poor or developing countries, are implicitly blamed for their trafficking problems. This inequality is further exacerbated by imposing a tier and sanction system through the TVPA anti-trafficking model.

(2) Though couched in rhetoric, about the need for an international response to human trafficking, implementing anti-trafficking norms through the TVPA tier framework provides a one-size fits all approach to bring the failing state into the United States view of best practices, which can be highly westernized or patriarchal.

The Tier system implicitly reaffirms that demand countries do not have as pressing trafficking problems, forcing supply countries to disproportionately shoulder the blame through issuing a TIP Report that is significantly skewed in favor of destination countries.

Despite its critiques, the TVPA is a necessary enforcement complementing the Palermo Protocol, and its effectiveness is crucial to the battle against human trafficking. The TVPA’s ability to persuade countries to adopt better anti-trafficking frameworks is, however, linked to its “actual and perceived credibility,” which requires that the reports are accurate and consistent in their assessment of countries. It is clear that a more consistently applied or transparent approach is necessary in preserving the authenticity of the ranking of countries subject to the TVPA. The most obvious place to begin would be to better align the TVPA with the guidelines of the Palermo Protocol, thus resolving the inherent conflict between the two policies, specifically in regards to sex trafficking.

However, some critics of the tier regime further suggest that sanctions should not have been implemented in the first place and should be removed.

187 This rhetoric often uses phrases such as “multilateralism” or “collaboration.” See TVPA (2000), supra note 58, at §102(24); see also Palermo Protocol (2000), supra note 2, at art. 9.
188 See Section III(B) and accompanying text (discussing conflicting definitions of sex trafficking).
189 See Comparison, supra note 186. “Some argue that it is difficult to determine what standards make a country eligible for Tier 1. They assert that Tier 2 and Tier 2 ‘Watch List’ have become ‘catch-all’ categories . . . .” Seeleke & Siskin, supra note 154. See also Jones et al., supra note 17 (indicating that the United States has 15,000 to 50,000 persons trafficked within its borders each year). “Critics have also argued that the TIP Reports employ selective criticism of country practices, ‘going light’ on U.S. allies and reserving their criticism for countries with which the United States has either a strained relationship or no strategic interests.” Chuang, supra note 21, at 482 (citing an interview with TIP Office staff members in 2004).
190 Chuang, supra note 21, at 474.
191 Id.
192 This may also relieve some of the specific difficulties Caribbean countries with legalized sex trade have found when complying with the TVPA. See supra Part III(A).
all together:

A sanction strategy would compromise U.S. efforts to seek international agreement on the Palermo Protocol and undermine the collaborative ethic the Protocol was intended to foster in at least two critical respects. First, sanctions would negatively impact international cooperation by causing governments to downplay the seriousness of their trafficking problems in order to avoid the direct or political consequences of sanctions . . . Second, the threat of sanctions would undermine international cooperation by causing governments and local populations to view as a threat the important work of local NGOs to raise the profile of trafficking.193

The problem, as stated above, suggests that the sanctions system may, in fact, only replicate the exact problem the Palermo Protocol sought to remedy: the lack of an international framework for eliminating human trafficking and an overreliance on the nation state implementation of anti-trafficking policies.194 However, because there is a lack of incentive to adhere to the Palermo Protocol in the absence of a TVPA-like structure, the sanctions regime seems to be a necessary evil. Therefore, rather than relying on a looming threat of sanctions and rankings of countries within the purview of the TVPA, economic incentives tied to clear and universally applied goals may be a preferable alternative.195

V. CONCLUSION

Enforcement of international human trafficking laws and Caribbean enforcement of human trafficking laws are continually developing. As Guyana and other Caribbean countries recognize and craft national action plans to address trafficking across and within their borders, they will continue to experience a fraught relationship with the vague and ever-evolving standards of the TVPA. The TVPA, although a system which, on its face, serves as the reprimanding mechanism behind the norms of the Palermo Protocol, has diverged from the spirit of the Protocol in two key ways: (1) its standards differ slightly from the Protocol, meaning that it fails to be a predictive or consistently applied persuasion device; and (2) it

193 Chuang, supra note 21, at 455.
194 See supra Part III(A)-(C).
195 “Most agree that extensive international cooperation is required in order to stop international trafficking and that both ‘carrots’ and ‘sticks’ may be needed to influence the policies of other governments, including financial and technical assistance, as well as the threat of sanctions.” Seeleke & Siskin, supra note 154, at 36.
departs from the Protocol’s call for multilateralism by reinforcing nation-state responsibility and culpability for trafficking that occurs within their borders. This departure from the original goals of the Protocol may seem necessary for the adoption and enforcement of international human trafficking laws, but a shift to more transparent expectations and incentives, rather than or in addition to sanctions, is far more likely to generate the willful compliance of Tier 2, Tier 2 Watch List, and Tier 3 countries, thereby fostering the collaborative approaches originally proposed by the Protocol.

VI. 2017 TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT ADDENDUM

On June 27, 2017, the United States’ Department of State published its most recent TIP Report ("TIP Report 2017"). There were notable changes in the Caribbean and overall compliance with the TVPA increased: Suriname and Haiti moved from Tier 3 to Tier 2 Watch List; Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Lucia all moved from Tier 2 Watch List to Tier 2; and Guyana finally attained Tier 1 status. TIP Report 2017 states that Guyana made the necessary achievements to reach Tier 1 status, “includ[ing] approving the 2017-2018 national action plan for combating trafficking in persons; increasing the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions; and identifying and assisting more victims for the second year in a row."198

The advancements made in the region, while a clear step toward addressing and eradicating human trafficking under the TVPA, are unlikely to be enough for the Caribbean or Latin American countries to maintain their Tier categorization. The TIP Report 2017 criticized Guyana for “not increas[ing] protection and services for victims outside the capital or provid[ing] adequate protection and shelter for child and male victims.”199 Both critiques are steps Guyana will have to take to be reassigned to Tier 1 in following years. The TIP Report 2017 further criticized other Caribbean and Latin American Countries for not meeting minimum standards in areas of action plan publication, victim services and support, and law

197 Compare TIP Report 2017, supra note 196, at 46, with TIP Report (2016), supra note 18, at 56. See also Parker Asmann, Latin America Still Falling Short in Combating Human Trafficking: Report, InSIGHT CRIME (June 27, 2017), http://www.insightcrime.org/component/content/article?id=8953:latin-america-still-falling-short-combating-human-trafficking-report (explaining that while Puerto Rico, Guyana, the Bahamas, Colombia and Chile attained Tier 1, over half of the region are Tier 2 and many, including Belize and Venezuela, fell below that).
199 Id.
enforcement, despite the region’s general improvement.\textsuperscript{200}

Overall, the international landscape in human trafficking has not changed significantly. In the TIP Report 2017, thirty-six countries received Tier 1 status, while most countries remain at Tier 2 or below.\textsuperscript{201} Eighty countries were ranked at Tier 2, forty-five were placed on the Tier 2 Watch List, and twenty-three at Tier 3.\textsuperscript{202} In 2017, only around twenty-percent of the countries achieved or maintained Tier 1 status\textsuperscript{203} and most Tier 1 countries are destination countries,\textsuperscript{204} indicating that since the publishing of the TIP Report 2016 there has been little change.\textsuperscript{205} A more collaborative response between destination and source countries will be necessary to create a holistic anti-trafficking approach. The TIP Report 2017 signifies that while the TVPA Tier system can create some change, source countries remain disproportionately responsible for trafficking.

Sarah Langer*