

## Barbados



**Population:** 287,773 (2012 est.)

**Population Growth Rate:** 0.354% (2012 est.)

**Birth Rate:** 12.23 births/1,000 population (2012 est.)

**Life Expectancy:** *total population:* 74.52 years; *male:* 72.25 years; *female:* 76.82 years (2012 est.)

**Literacy Rate:** *total population:* 99.7%; *male:* 99.7%; *female:* 99.7% (2002)

**Net Migration Rate:** -0.3 migrants/1,000 population (2012 est.)

**Unemployment Rate:** 12% (2011 est.)

**Gross Domestic Product per Capita:** \$23,600 (2012 est.)

**Religions:** Protestant 63.4% (Anglican 28.3%, Pentecostal 18.7%, Methodist 5.1%, other 11.3%), Roman Catholic 4.2%, other Christian 7%, other 4.8%, unspecified 20.6% (2008)

**Languages:** English

**Ethnic Groups:** black 90%, white 4%, Asian and other 6%

**Capital:** Bridgetown<sup>1</sup>

### Trafficking Routes

Barbados, like many other Caribbean nations, is a trafficking route for victims trafficked from other Caribbean nations to Canada, the United States, and Europe. Barbados is also a destination country for trafficking victims: women and girls from Guyana, the Dominican Republic, and other Caribbean nations are trafficked to Barbados for sexual exploitation in strip clubs and brothels, as well as for domestic servitude.<sup>2</sup>

### Factors That Contribute to the Trafficking Infrastructure

Barbados, has specific anti-trafficking laws. A 2005 assessment by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) stated that persons were trafficked to work both as prostitutes and as domestic workers. Persons reportedly were trafficked to work in the construction and garment industries, where they were subject to low wages and false contracts.<sup>3</sup> Coordinator of the study, Ashley Garrett, said traffickers use the illegal status of their “workers” to control and take advantage of them.

<sup>1</sup> CIA, World Fact Book - Barbados, Apr. 2, 2009, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bb.html>.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. STATE DEPT. TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT, HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MODERN DAY SLAVERY, BARBADOS (June 2009), available at: <http://gynet.com/humantrafficking/Barbados-2.htm>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. STATE DEPT. BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR 2007, *COUNTRY REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES: BARBADOS*, (Mar. 11, 2008), available at .  
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100627.htm>

## Forms of Trafficking

Prostitution is illegal in Barbados, but it remains a problem due to the combination of overwhelming poverty and tourism.<sup>4</sup> Brothels with women from Guyana, the Dominican Republic, and other Caribbean islands operated in the country. There have been reports of government officials' involvement in the trafficking. The IOM noted that the government typically has just deported the victims and has failed to investigate or prosecute the alleged perpetrators.

In 2008, 153 people, 90 of whom were from Ghana, were left stranded on the island for over three months because their charter aircraft failed to return to take them back home. The stranded passengers said they had been forced to work illegally on a construction site and to get by on aid and shelter from kind Barbadians.<sup>5</sup>

## Government Responses

The Sexual Offences Act of 1992 prohibits procuring another person for prostitution, whether in Barbados or elsewhere, even if the person is already in prostitution, and it prohibits procuring another person so that person will frequent or become an inmate of a brothel, regardless of whether the victim is already an inmate of a brothel elsewhere. Punishment for these offenses is imprisonment for up to 15 years.<sup>6</sup>

In June 2008, the Minister of Family, Youth, Sports, and the Environment, Esther Byer-Suckoo, declared that Barbados needs to lead the way in the region in developing legislation to address human trafficking.<sup>7</sup> During 2007, the Immigration Department deported a total of 258 persons for unspecified immigration violations, the majority of whom were from Guyana (129), followed by Jamaica (67), and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (24). Trafficking victims were often treated as criminals and deported after being held temporarily for questioning.<sup>8</sup>

In 2012 the Government established a National Task Force with the mandate to coordinate Barbados' anti-trafficking activities and to implement and develop the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons. The body is composed by 13 members including representatives from Ministries and chaired by an Attorney General.<sup>9</sup>

## Nongovernmental and International Organization Responses

An exploratory study conducted by the IOM found that in Barbados, and in some of its Caribbean neighboring states, people had been brought illegally into these countries and forced into labor. This news came on the heels of a warning by Barbados' Director of the Bureau of Gender Affairs that, although trafficking in women and children especially for sexual purposes was not even a minor problem in the country, the tourist industry and the opening up of the labor

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<sup>4</sup> *Human Rights Report on Human Rights Practices: Barbados*, *supra* note 3.

<sup>5</sup> 90 Ghanaians Stranded in Barbados, RADIOJAMAICA, March 28, 2008, available at: <http://www.radiojamaica.com/content/view/6757/88/>.

<sup>6</sup> Sex Offences Act, 1992, Article 13, available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/ngos/lgbti2.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Government to Deal with Human Trafficking, CARIBBEAN BROADCASTING COMPANY, available at: <http://www.cbc.bb/index.pl/article?id=1504836>

<sup>8</sup> Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Barbados, *supra* note 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Issues of Human Trafficking on Barbados Agenda*, CARIBBEAN 360, Mar. 19, 2012, available at: [http://www.caribbean360.com/index.php/news/barbados\\_news/562349.html#axz1vnm6XsIa](http://www.caribbean360.com/index.php/news/barbados_news/562349.html#axz1vnm6XsIa)

markets could see the illegal activity surfacing eventually.<sup>10</sup> In 2007, the U.N. General Assembly Human Rights Committee went to Barbados to discuss issues concerning trafficking. The committee found the region to be “very susceptible” to human trafficking.<sup>11</sup>

Barbadian authorities met with members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to discuss initiatives to prevent trafficking. Louis Tull, chairman and chief regional negotiator, for the CARICOM Drafting Committee, of Barbados, said a lot of resources would be used because of the geography of the region. The scattered islands make it easy to move from one island to another with a speed-boat. One of the proposed initiatives was to develop victim protection programs for the various jurisdictions involving all the islands.<sup>12</sup> The committee found there was no law against trafficking children under the age of 18, and there was reportedly a lot of trafficking of children for sexual and labor exploitation. The committee stressed that prostitutes who are trafficked are modern-day slaves.<sup>13</sup>

In 2007, two officers of IOM came to the island and conducted a workshop on human trafficking, its implications and ramifications. The outcome of the workshop was that participants arranged to set up mechanisms to do empirical research and to form a watch-dog operation to scrutinize events or actions that resembled human trafficking and report to IOM.<sup>14</sup>

### **Multilateral Initiatives**

In 2005, The Business and Professional Women’s Foundation (BPW) partnered with the Bureau of Gender Affairs in a project sponsored by the IOM. The organization wanted to alert the Barbadian public as to the nature and characteristics of human trafficking and to put Barbados on guard, to prevent the island from being used as a point of distribution for human trafficking.<sup>15</sup> Three public campaign informed citizens about the characteristics of human trafficking. It was noted that, although some of the characteristics were present in Barbados, there were no recorded cases of trafficking.<sup>16</sup> A few days after the campaign, a case was reported involving 14 Indian workers who were deported because they were hired under suspicious circumstances and were living in inadequate conditions. BPW Barbados raised questions about it.<sup>17</sup>

In March 2007, regional security forces dismantled a human trafficking ring destined for Barbados, which involved victims as young as 13 and 14 years old.<sup>18</sup> The Royal Canadian Mounted Police senior liaison officer for the region confirmed that the principal organizers of the ring were from Barbados and Guyana. The girls originated from China and Russia, as well as from throughout the region.

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<sup>10</sup> *Human Trafficking in Barbados and Six Other Caribbean Countries*, CARIBBEAN NET NEWS, Mar. 18, 2005, available at: <http://www.caribbeannetnews.com/2005/03/18/trafficking.shtml>

<sup>11</sup> U.N. Human Rights Committee, 89<sup>th</sup> Sess., 2440<sup>th</sup> mtg., U.N. Doc. HR/CT/689 (Mar. 22, 2007) available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/278/39/PDF/N0727839.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> *The Regional News: Barbados, Human Trafficking*, 1 BPW NORTH AMERICA & NON-SPANISH SPEAKING CARIBBEAN NEWSLETTER (BPW International Federation of Business and Professional Women), Sept. 2006, available at <http://www.bpw-northamerica.org/uploaded/File/NEWS3September2006.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Barbados, *supra*, note 3.