



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
TO THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, GENEVA**

Note No. 14/2023

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Specialized Agencies in Europe presents its compliments to the Special Procedures Branch of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, with reference to UA TTO 3/2022 dated 27 December 2022 on the subject of "*Joint Urgent Appeal from Special Procedures*", has the honour to transmit herewith the response of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Specialized Agencies in Europe avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Special Procedures Branch of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 24 February 2023



**Response of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the
Joint Urgent Appeal from Special Procedures, UA TTO 3/2022**

1. Please provide any additional information and any comment you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) in governing a sovereign State recognises the potential impact of persons entering or returning to the jurisdiction from conflict zones, having endured exposure to extreme violence and hardship. In this regard, there continues to be on-going efforts and particular emphasis on Trinidad and Tobago's readiness in treating with the repatriation or return of persons from conflict zones. Whilst this matter is of utmost importance, this process involves ensuring that there exists the necessary legislative framework to manage this dire situation, as well as appropriate arrangements and resources are allocated to deal with the deradicalization and reintegration of persons safely into society. It is of utmost importance that the GORTT safeguards its citizens and overall national security interest.

The GORTT wishes to thank the Special Procedures for transferring the information received as per its respective mandates. Please be informed that the GORTT continuously collects intelligence and information on these evolving matters. However, due to the fact that there is no concrete evidence to confirm the assertions being made by persons claiming to be Trinidad and Tobago nationals or of those having been taken to the conflict zones against their free will, it is essential to have laws and procedures in place to properly address all underlying issues.

The GORTT further underscores that due to a lack of resources we are unable to deploy Law Enforcement Officers to Syria to lend confirmation to the information proffered. As such, we are unable to verify the accuracy of the information submitted and provide any additional information in this regard. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, please be guided that the requisite preliminary internal checks in relation to any records and/or issuance of birth certificates and other identification documents will be actioned accordingly in respect of the named individuals. Moreover, as correctly indicated in your letter, whilst these matters fall within our respectful purview, the GORTT has to undertake a comprehensive approach

and in treating with matters on a case-by-case basis will apply domestic law in conformity to the rule of law and applicable international standards.

Given the nature and complexity of the trafficking conducted by these terrorist organisations, the GORTT is heavily reliant on the provision of assistance from Foreign Law Enforcement Authorities to coordinate or pursue effectively, the manner in which these trafficking are executed, in its locality. The overall protection of human rights, safety and wellbeing of all nationals is of paramount concern to the GORTT and its approach to these matters work in tandem with the various Human Rights Council Resolutions.

2. Please provide details on the domestic mechanism(s) in place in the Trinidad and Tobago to review requests for repatriation.

In alignment with its positive obligation to identify, assist and protect victims of trafficking, the GORTT, in addressing this matter, has been working assiduously with all stakeholders via *draft* legislation to ensure that this crisis is determined appropriately. This legislation will introduce *inter alia* a framework for specific measures to treat with the complex issue of persons requiring specialist attention and care to safely reintegrate them into society having returned from geographical areas marred by war and extreme violence. The Policy paper, as prepared by the Ministry of National Security in tandem with other Ministries, is in its draft stages. In the interim, the GORTT wishes to underscore its commitment to safeguarding national security interests and assures that in this essential process, which involves the balancing of rights, all requisite steps will be taken to ensure constitutional rights are preserved.

3. Please provide information on what steps have been taken to address the risk and prevent the transfer of [REDACTED] from the Hourí Centre to an adult detention centre.

In alignment with its positive obligation to identify, assist and protect victims of trafficking, the GORTT, in addressing this matter, has been working assiduously with all stakeholders via *draft* legislation to ensure that this crisis is determined appropriately. This legislation will introduce *inter alia* a framework for specific measures to treat with the complex issue of persons requiring specialist attention and care to safely reintegrate them into society having returned from geographical areas marred by war and extreme violence. The Policy paper, as prepared by the Ministry of National

Security in tandem with other Ministries is in its draft stages. In the interim, the GORTT wishes to underscore its commitment to safeguarding national security interests and assures that in this essential process, which involves the balancing of rights, all requisite steps will be taken to ensure constitutional rights are preserved.

- 4. Please provide details on steps that may have been taken to protect the physical and mental health and integrity of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to safeguard their rights, to end their detention, and to ensure their safe repatriation.**

The GORTT has received and continues to receive a plethora of requests by persons claiming to be citizens of Trinidad and Tobago in similar circumstances with demands for return. In treating with all matters, as aforementioned, the GORTT is paying specific attention to this on-going complex matter and is taking all requisite steps towards ensueing the necessary preparations and resources are allocated to effectively deal with the safe repatriation of Trinidad and Tobago citizens.

- 5. Please provide details on the domestic mechanism and procedure that has been set up to identify and protect the rights of individuals who have been trafficked into North-East Syria.**

The GORTT, in addressing this matter, has been working assiduously with all stakeholders via *draft* legislation to ensure that this crisis is determined appropriately. This legislation will introduce *inter alia* a framework for specific measures to treat with the complex issue of persons requiring specialist attention and care to safely reintegrate them into society having returned from geographical area marred by war and extreme violence. The Policy paper, as prepared by the Ministry of National Security in tandem with other Ministries is in draft stages. In the interim, the GORTT wishes to underscore its commitment to safeguarding national security interests and assures that in this essential process, which involves the balancing of rights, all requisite steps will be taken to ensure constitutional rights are preserved.
