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**UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW
51ST SESSION**

**STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SAINT LUCIA
FOR THE 51ST SESSION OF THE
UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

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Introduction

1. The European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) is an international, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights around the world. The ECLJ also holds Special Consultative status before the United Nations Economic and Social Council. This report discusses the status of human rights in Saint Lucia for the 51st session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

Background

2. Saint Lucia is a country located in the Caribbean Sea and has a population of approximately 174,800 people.¹ The population is predominantly Christian, with approximately 50.6% identifying as Roman Catholic, 10.8% as Seventh-day Adventist, 9% as Pentecostal, 2.2% as Mennonite, 14.1% as unaffiliated, and 13.3% as belonging to other religions.²

3. Saint Lucia's last review was held on January 18, 2021.³ As a result of the review, Saint Lucia received 165 recommendations, 113 of which it supported.⁴ It was recommended by Cuba, and supported by Saint Lucia, that the government "[c]ontinue implementing prevention measures and measures to confront trafficking in persons, focusing on protection, specialized assistance and social and community reintegration of victims of that crime."⁵ No recommendations were made regarding religious freedom.

Legal Framework

4. Under Article 4 of the Constitution of Saint Lucia, "No person shall be held in slavery or servitude."⁶

5. In Saint Lucia, the 2010 Counter-Trafficking Act criminalizes human trafficking. Under Article 5 of this Act:

A person who engages in, conspires to engage in, attempts to engage in, assists another person to engage in, or organizes or directs another person to engage in trafficking in persons commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction

¹ David Lawrence Niddrie et al., *Saint Lucia*, BRITANNICA, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Saint-Lucia> (last updated July 13, 2025).

² *Id.*

³ *Universal Periodic Review – Saint Lucia*, OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/lc-index> (last visited July 16, 2025).

⁴ *Infographic – Saint Lucia*, OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session37/LC/SAINT-LUCIA-Infographics.pdf> (last visited July 16, 2025).

⁵ *UPR of Saint Lucia (3rd Cycle – 37th Session): Thematic List of Recommendations*, OHCHR 16 https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session37/LC/UPR37_Saint_Lucia_Thematic_List_of_Recommendations.docx (last visited July 16, 2025).

⁶ CONST. OF ST. LUCIA 1978 art. 4, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/St_Lucia_1978.

to a fine not exceeding one hundred thousand dollars or a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years.⁷

6. Saint Lucia is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).⁸ Article 8 of the ICCPR states that “[n]o one shall be held in slavery; slavery and the slave-trade in all their forms shall be prohibited. No one shall be held in servitude.”⁹

7. Additionally, Saint Lucia is a party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.¹⁰ Under Article 9 sec. 1 of this Protocol:

1. States Parties shall establish comprehensive policies, programmes and other measures:

(a) To prevent and combat trafficking in persons; and

(b) To protect victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, from revictimization.¹¹

Human Trafficking

8. Human trafficking is a global problem that has impacted every region of the world. This is especially true in Central America and the Caribbean.¹² According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, there are 0.64 identified victims of human trafficking for every 100,000 people in Central America and the Caribbean.¹³ However, these figures only reflect the reported number of human trafficking victims. Because of the clandestine nature of human trafficking, many cases go unreported. This means that the actual number of human trafficking victims in Saint Lucia and the region is likely much higher. In Saint Lucia, authorities have yet to successfully prosecute a human trafficking case.¹⁴

⁷ Act No. 7 of 2010, Counter Trafficking Act 2010, art. 5 (Act No. 7/2010) (St. Lucia), <https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natlegbod/2010/en/38811>.

⁸ *Ratification Status for Saint Lucia*, OHCHR, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=147&Lang=EN (last visited July 16, 2025).

⁹ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights art. 8, *adopted* Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights> [hereinafter ICCPR].

¹⁰ *Chapter XVIII Penal Matters 12. A Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*, U.N. TREATY COLLECTION, https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18 (last visited June 25, 2025).

¹¹ Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime art. 9 § 1, Nov. 15, 2000, G.A. Res. 55/25, U.N. Doc. A/RES/55/25, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons>.

¹² *How Widespread are Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling in Latin America and the Caribbean? And Other Questions Answered*, UNODC, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2024/September/how-widespread-are-human-trafficking-and-migrant-smuggling-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-and-other-questions-answered.html> (last visited July 16, 2025).

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *St. Lucia*, FREEDOM HOUSE (2024), <https://freedomhouse.org/country/st-lucia/freedom-world/2024>.

9. In Central America and the Caribbean, fifty-two percent of identified victims are girls, while thirty percent are women.¹⁵ These victims are primarily trafficked for sexual exploitation in nightclubs, unofficial brothels, bars, hotels, and apartments.¹⁶ Saint Lucia is not immune to this problem. For example, in December 2022, the Serious Crimes Unit in Saint Lucia found four human trafficking victims while exercising search warrants.¹⁷ The victims were forced to work in an adult entertainment venue.¹⁸ Authorities also arrested the owner of the establishment.¹⁹ While there has yet to be a conviction in this case, authorities are hopeful they will be able to convict the owner of human trafficking.²⁰

10. In Saint Lucia, criminal gangs involved in human trafficking are typically small-scale operations.²¹ The victims include Saint Lucian citizens as well as migrants from other nearby countries such as Haiti, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic.²² The problem has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created favorable opportunities for traffickers to groom, recruit, and exploit victims.²³ This is because restrictions related to COVID-19, like curfews and lockdowns, made it easier for traffickers to confine and restrict the movement of their victims.²⁴ Further, COVID-19 had a negative impact on the economy, and vulnerable individuals were desperate to find good-paying jobs.²⁵

11. In Saint Lucia, there have been very few reported cases but this does not mean that human trafficking is not a problem.²⁶ Deputy Police Commissioner Wayne Charley stated that “[w]e must take a good, long look at human trafficking” and that “[g]angs trade people. They profit from this.”²⁷ The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Dr. Elizabeth Baily, also expressed her concern about human trafficking in Saint Lucia and warned that the problem could grow in the future if action is not taken now.²⁸

12. In December 2024, the Department of Home Affairs partnered with the Organization of American States (OAS) and a local NGO to review and improve guidelines related to the prevention of the sexual exploitation of women.²⁹ The guidelines drafted as part of this partnership were the first of their kind in Saint Lucia.³⁰ The primary purpose of these guidelines was to develop a system that would allow authorities to detect, investigate, and prosecute

¹⁵ *How Widespread are Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling in Latin America and the Caribbean? And Other Questions Answered*, *supra* note 12.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *St. Lucia Gangs Purchase Guns with Human Trafficking Money – Police*, ST. VINCENT TIMES (Mar. 23, 2023), <https://www.stvincenttimes.com/st-lucia-gangs-purchase-guns-with-human-trafficking-money-police/>.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *St. Lucia*, GLOBAL ORGANIZED CRIME INDEX (2023), https://ocindex.net/country/st_lucia.

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Trafficking in Persons*, UNODC 1-2, https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/HTMSS_Thematic_Brief_on_COVID-19.pdf (last visited July 16, 2025).

²⁵ *Id.* at 1.

²⁶ Joanne Clark, *Saint Lucia Steps to Combat Human Trafficking*, CARIBBEAN NEWS WEEKLY (Mar. 5, 2024), <https://www.caribbeannationalweekly.com/news/caribbean-news/saint-lucia-takes-steps-to-combat-human-trafficking/>.

²⁷ *St. Lucia Gangs Purchase Guns with Human Trafficking Money – Police*, *supra* note 17.

²⁸ Clark, *supra* note 26.

²⁹ Virgil Leonty, *Department of Home Affairs Collaborates to Prevent the Sexual Exploitation of Women*, GOV'T OF ST. LUCIA (Mar. 8, 2024), <https://www.govt.lc/news/department-of-home-affairs-collaborates-to-prevent-the-sexual-exploitation-of-women>.

³⁰ *Id.*

human trafficking offenders.³¹ Among other things, these guidelines stressed the need for increased law enforcement training, safe houses for victims, and anti-trafficking awareness campaigns.³²

13. While we welcome this development, Saint Lucia has been failing in its responsibility to combat human trafficking and protect victims. This can easily be seen through the fact that Saint Lucia has never secured a conviction for human trafficking, despite the example given above, where four victims were rescued from human trafficking. Additionally, we are concerned about the provisions in Saint Lucia's 2010 Counter Trafficking Act that allow individuals convicted of human trafficking to be sentenced to time in prison *or* paying a fine. Allowing a convicted human trafficker to simply pay a fine, sends a clear message that Saint Lucia does not take human trafficking seriously.

Recommendations

14. As demonstrated above and through the fact that Saint Lucia has yet to convict a human trafficker, Saint Lucia is not effectively combatting human trafficking. While the government has recently taken steps to institute more robust guidelines in fighting human trafficking, the effects of these guidelines have yet to be seen. We ask that Saint Lucia seriously commit to combatting human trafficking and take all steps necessary to prosecute human traffickers. Additionally, we ask that the government revise its punishment for human traffickers, which currently allows convicted traffickers to pay a fine instead of receiving a prison sentence.

³¹ *Id.*

³² *Id.*