

The Canada Declaration

For A Human Trafficking and Slavery Free Canada

We, the undersigned, are committed to a Human Trafficking and Slavery Free Canada.

As such, we collectively support the adoption of a Zero-Tolerance approach by the Government of Canada to Human Trafficking in all its forms in Canada and globally.

Human Trafficking, as defined by the United Nations (UN) Palermo Protocol, is a serious and complex crime stripping individuals of their rights, freedoms, dignity and humanity.

Human Trafficking is one of the fastest growing crimes in Canada today.

We affirm that:

- I. Human Trafficking is a gross violation of human rights and dignity.
- II. Every iteration of Human Trafficking is a form of Modern Slavery including Labour Trafficking, Sex Trafficking, and Forced Marriage.
- III. There is a primary and lasting impact on Victims; the majority of whom are women and children, and many of whom have experienced multiple traumas in their lives.
- IV. Human Trafficking is one of the fastest growing crimes with the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimating that there are currently 50 million people in Modern Slavery today, compared to 40 million in 2016.
- V. Human Trafficking is a lucrative global industry and estimated to be the second largest source of illegal income in the world at \$150 USD billion dollars per year.
- VI. The majority of children and youth who are victimized by sexual exploitation are female, however there is growing awareness of sexual exploitation of boys and LGBTQ2+ youth.
- VII. Youth from Indigenous (who in some cases make up more than 50% of all Victims) and Newcomer communities, are over-represented among Victims. As these populations are more vulnerable and targeted by perpetrators (who often believe they will less or no prosecution as a result) sexual and labour exploitation can happen to any child or youth regardless of social, cultural, or economic background.

We know that in Canada:

- 93% of Human Trafficking Victims are Canadian.
- Many Victims do not even realize that they have been or are being trafficked.
- Awareness, attention to universal and consistent messaging, protocols, training, and definitions of trafficking, and education about trafficking in all its various forms, are essential to addressing and suppressing Human Trafficking.
- Perpetrators use various forms of social media as Human Trafficking recruiting tools to entice, groom, and lure Victims.

- Individuals from migrant, immigrant, or socially or economically disadvantaged communities are also at increased risk.
- The average age of first being trafficked is 13 years old. Sources indicate that the age is even younger for Indigenous Victims.
- Human Trafficking is a grossly under-reported and serious crime. Many Victims either do not have the supports they need to report, and/or rarely disclose due to personal feelings of shame.
- Human Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is a contributing factor on the human rights crisis of MMIWG2S+ and MMEIP (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit and Missing, Murdered and Exploited Indigenous Peoples).
- We acknowledge that one of the greatest risk factors of being trafficked is gender-based violence towards women and girls.

While some progress has been made in the fight against Human Trafficking, we recognize that there remains a constant need for vigilance, an ongoing dedication of resources, and a culture of commitment to improving outcomes.

We acknowledge that reconciliation with Indigenous peoples requires Canada to take a concerted effort to end the factors that lead to their over-representation as Victims of Human Trafficking.

We also recognize the resilience and courage of Survivors who have spoken out and raised their voices and lament that far too often, their voices have not been centered or heard.

In an effort to characterize freedom as it relates to Human Trafficking, we collectively maintain that Force, Fraud, and Coercion are not compatible with a civilized society's notion of freedom. We take a willing posture of humility, teachability, and thankfulness in our efforts to combat Human Trafficking, and are grateful for all those who fought and continue to fight for us, worked and continue to work for us, and died for us to provide us with an opportunity to live in the great nation of Canada. We recognize that the maintenance of freedom requires diligence and sacrifice.

We recognize that Human Trafficking is a multi-faceted crime and requires a comprehensive, holistic and country wide effort to fight it on every front.

Human Trafficking is an outcome of vulnerability, and we implore all Canadians to join us in defending the world's most vulnerable, recognizing and honouring our common humanity, common struggles, and common desires for love, joy, safety, nourishment, family, and community.

That is why we are calling on the Government of Canada and all Canadians to adopt a Zero Tolerance approach to end Human Trafficking.

Canada's leadership as the first country to take a Zero-Tolerance approach, will have a resounding impact globally.

We call on all Canadians to support this effort by:

- Making “confirmed slavery free” choices when purchasing consumer products.
- Endeavouring to learn more about what Human Trafficking looks like in their communities.
- Supporting Survivors and the organizations that serve them.
- Learning about the signs of trafficking, maintaining vigilance against it, and being aware of how to address it with a “do no harm” approach.
- Seeking to understand and respectfully share the stories of Human Trafficking in a respectful, trauma-informed way.

We call on the Government of Canada to adopt a Zero Tolerance approach by:

- Centering the voices of Survivors by launching the National Survivor Advisory Committee (NSAC).
- Shielding Survivors from debt or criminality incurred during trafficking.
- Increasing trauma-informed specialized services and shelter available to all Victims.
- Securing justice for Victims by ensuring sentences reflect the severity of the crimes for convicted traffickers.
- Supporting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through increased partnerships and prevention efforts.
- Amending the Criminal Code to be consistent with the Palermo Protocol and international law.
- Increasing training available for prosecutors and judges.
- Requiring all federally regulated industries and workplaces to display information about Human Trafficking and the National Human Trafficking Hotline and provide training to new and existing employees who may interact with, or come into contact with, a Victim of Human Trafficking.
- Implementing robust measures that require supply-chain reporting of Canadian companies.
- Improving efforts to detect and apprehend imports of products made from slavery.
- Maintaining a constant national Human Trafficking strategy with measurables and annual reporting.
- Increasing partnerships with the private sector to prevent trafficking.

« Nous, les soussignés, sommes déterminés à faire du Canada un pays sans traite de personnes ni esclavagisme. Ainsi, nous appuyons collectivement l’approche de tolérance zéro du gouvernement du Canada envers toutes les formes de traite de personne au Canada et ailleurs dans le monde. »

« Nous déclarons que la traite de personnes constitue une violation flagrante des droits de la personne et de la dignité humaine. »

« Nous reconnaissons que la réconciliation avec les peuples autochtones exige que le Canada déploie des efforts concertés pour éradiquer les facteurs favorisant la surreprésentation des Autochtones parmi les victimes de la traite de personnes. »

« Nous reconnaissons également la résilience et le courage des survivants qui ont dénoncé ce type d'acte et nous déplorons le fait que leur voix n'ait pas été entendue. »

« [...] nous exhortons le gouvernement du Canada et tous les Canadiens d'adopter une approche de tolérance zéro à l'égard de la traite de personne, qui doit être éradiquée. »

« Nous, signataires de la Déclaration du Canada, sommes unis et déterminés à soutenir les appels à la liberté et à la vérité des gardiens du savoir autochtone et, dans l'esprit de l'hymne national du Canada, nous demandons que notre territoire demeure glorieux et libre au chapitre de la traite de personnes. »

Co-Authored in consultation with other stakeholders and approved collectively by representatives of: RAGAS, IJM CANADA, THE MEKONG CLUB, AND #NOTINMYCITY

Rotary Action Group Against Slavery

The Mekong Club

International Justice Mission

#NotInMyCity

APPENDIX/SOURCES
THE CANADA DECLARATION

-“Human Trafficking is one of the fastest growing crimes in Canada today.”

(Department of Justice Canada)

-“Human Trafficking is one of the fastest growing crimes with the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimating that there are currently 50 million people in modern slavery today, compared to 40 million in 2016.”

(https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_855019/lang--en/index.htm)

-“Human Trafficking is a lucrative global industry and estimated to be the second largest source of illegal income in the world at \$150 Billion dollars per year.

(International Labour Office. (2014). “Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour”

“The majority of children and youth who are Victimized by sexual exploitation are female, however there is growing awareness of sexual exploitation of boys and LGBTQ2+ youth.”

(The United States Department of Justice. (2020). <https://www.justice.gov/humantrafficking/what-is-human-trafficking>)

“Youth from populations of Newcomers and Indigenous communities are over-represented among Victims. Although these populations are more vulnerable, and targeted by perpetrators, sexual and labour exploitation can happen to any child or youth regardless of social, cultural, or economic background.”

(The United States Department of Justice. (2020). <https://www.justice.gov/humantrafficking/what-is-human-trafficking>)

-“93% of Human Trafficking Victims are Canadian.”

(Canadian Women’s Foundation. (2014). “Fact Sheet: Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada”)

-“Indigenous Victims are significantly overrepresented and in some places make up over 50% of the Victims.”

The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking. (2021). (“Human Trafficking Corridors in Canada”),
Native Women’s Association of Canada. (2014). ‘Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Aboriginal Women and Girls Literature Review and Key Informant Interviews, Final Report’),
The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking. (2021). ‘Human Trafficking Corridors in Canada’)

-“Many Victims do not even realize they are being trafficked, or have been trafficked.”

Karly Church - Canadian Survivor of Domestic Sex Trafficking/Durham Regional VSU Human Trafficking Crisis Intervention Counsellor-The Reading Stone Report

Bender, R. & Murphy, J. Testimonies Retrieved on August 12, 2021 from (<https://endinghumantrafficking.org/podcast/234-relentless-advocate-rebecca-bender/>): “I did not self-identify as a traffic victim for a very long time because my situation never matched the brochures, the fliers, commercials, the media.”

-“Awareness, attention to universal and consistent messaging, protocols, training, and definitions of trafficking, and education about trafficking in all its various forms, are essential to addressing and suppressing Human Trafficking.”

(Adapted from “The Reading Stone Report”, page 39-40 (<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/the-reading-stone-the-survivors-lens-to-human-trafficking>))

-“Many perpetrators specifically target Indigenous and other radicalized populations because they believe they will face less or no prosecution.”

Quote source, Survivor Advocate April Eve Wiberg. Citation, “113 Pathways to Justice - Recommendations from the Alberta Joint Working Group on MMIWG” (<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/113-pathways-to-justice-recommendations-of-joint-working-group-on-mmiwg>), Globe and Mail (<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/the-trafficked-sexual-exploitation-is-costing-canadian-women-their-lives/article28700849/>), Frontiers (<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/frsc.2022.884195/full>), Domestic Sex Trafficking of Aboriginal Women and Girls (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime/human-trafficking/human-trafficking-training/module-2/aboriginal-women>) - Government of BC (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime/human-trafficking/human-trafficking-training/module-2/aboriginal-women>), “Indigenous Women And Youth In The Sex Trade: A Systematic Review Of Culturally Relevant Support Systems For Exiting The Trade” (uwindsor.ca) (<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=8713&context=etd>)

-“Perpetrators use various forms of social media as Human Trafficking recruiting tools to entice, groom, and lure Victims.”

(On-Ramps, Intersections, and Exit Routes:

A Roadmap for Systems and Industries to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking (Polaris 2018, Brittany Anthony))

-“The average age of first being trafficked is 13 years old. Sources indicate that the age is even younger for Indigenous Victims.”

(Canadian Women’s Foundation. (2014). “An Assessment of Sex Trafficking in Canada”)

-“Human Trafficking is a grossly under-reported and serious crime. Many Victims either do not have the supports they need to report, and/or rarely disclose due to personal feelings of shame.”

(Quote source, Survivor Advocate April Eve Wiberg. Citation, Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) Human Trafficking Brief to the House of Commons - June 15 2018 [NativeWomensAssociationOfCanada-e.pdf \(ourcommons.ca\)](#), Additional supporting article, CBC News: "[Youth support organization says it needs more government help to fight sexual exploitation | CBC News](#)"

-“Human Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is a contributing factor on the human rights crisis of MMIWG2S+ and MMEIP (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit and Missing, Murdered and Exploited Indigenous Peoples).”

Quote source, Survivor Advocate April Eve Wiberg. Citation, Global News June 3 2019 article [From genocide to human trafficking: Key takeaways from the MMIWG inquiry - National | Globalnews.ca](#) , “113 Pathways to Justice - Recommendations from the Alberta Joint Working Group on MMIWG” (<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/113-pathways-to-justice-recommendations-of-joint-working-group-on-mmiwg>), CBC News (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/bridget-perrier-human-trafficking-mmiwg-1.5189625>)