

Human Trafficking and the Sex Trade

What is Human Trafficking?

Trafficking involves the recruitment and transportation of persons, using deception, coercion and threats in order to place and keep them in a situation of forced labour, slavery or servitude. Persons are trafficked into a variety of sectors of the informal economy, including prostitution, domestic work, agriculture, the garment industry or street begging.¹

Did you know?

- **A majority of people trafficked are women and girls.** The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reports that 66% of victims are women, 13% girls, 9 % boys, and 12% men.²
- Trafficking is the third largest grossing sector of organized crime after drugs and arms. In 2005 the estimate profits were **US\$31.6 billion**³.
- The US Department of State estimated that there are at least 800,000 people trafficked across borders annually, the majority being women trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation. This does not account for the estimated **millions** who are trafficked within their own countries.⁴

How many people are being trafficked?

It is estimated that 2.44 million people were trafficked in 2008 for the purposes:

- 43%: sexual exploitation
- 32%: labor exploitation
- 25%: mixture of both
- 1.2 million were minors

- [The International Labour Organization](#), 2008.

What about Canada?

- The RCMP estimates that **600-800 persons** are trafficked **into** Canada annually, predominantly for **sexual purposes**, and additional 1,500-2,200 persons are trafficked through Canada into the United States.⁵
- **Girls as young as 12 are trafficked in Canada for sexual purposes.**⁶
- There is no reliable data on the number of persons trafficked within Canada. **Aboriginal women are disproportionately affected** according to the 2007 Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.⁷
- Canada is believed to be a transit, and destination country in the international trafficking of persons. Victims may enter Canada through both legal and illegal means, using genuine or falsified documents. Once in Canada, intelligence shows that trafficked victims are predominantly forced to work in the sex trade.⁸

In June 2008, Imani Nakpangi became the first person to ever convicted of human trafficking in Canada. Meanwhile, over 20,000 traffickers were convicted worldwide between 2003 and 2008. Nakpangi's victim was a homeless Canadian teenage girl who was sold for sex by Nakpangi between the age of 15 and 18 and kept under his control through physical violence and threats against her family. He earned over \$360,000 by selling her for sex in Peel Region, in the Greater Toronto Area.⁹

¹ UNIFEM, [Trafficking in Women and Girls](#).

² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's Global [Report on Trafficking in Persons](#) 2009

³ The ILO's Global Report, [A Global Alliance Against Forced Labor](#), 2005

⁴ The US state department, [Trafficking in Persons Report](#), 2008

⁵ *Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)*, 2004

⁶ Criminal Intelligence Service Canada's, [Strategic Intelligence Brief. Organized Crime and Domestic Trafficking in Persons in Canada](#), 2008.

⁷ Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, [Turning Outrage into Action to Address Trafficking for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation in Canada](#) 2007.

⁸ Department of Justice, [Is Human Trafficking a Problem in Canada?](#), 2009.

⁹ Canada's Journal of Ideas, [The Slave Trade is Back: Confronting Human Trafficking in Canada and Beyond](#), 2010.