

# Canada

## Canadian Federal Police

### **Human Trafficking in Canada**

Human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation continues to constitute the majority of trafficking cases encountered by law enforcement across Canada, most often in large urban centres and with most victims being Canadian women.

There have been no changes in the Canadian situation regarding persons who may be at risk of human trafficking. However, more evidence of human trafficking for forced labour has come to light during the last few years, which often involves foreign nationals.

For cases involving foreign national victims, suspects involved in human trafficking activities mostly operate with associates of similar ethnicity and have ethnic ties to the source countries of their victims. For example, intelligence suggests that organized crime networks with Eastern European links have been involved in the organized entry of women into Canada for employment in escort services in the greater Toronto area and possibly in massage and escort services in the Montreal area. These groups have demonstrated transnational capabilities and significant associations with convicted human traffickers in various countries. Intelligence has found that Eastern European women who had been recruited to come to Canada to work in the sex trade are vulnerable to being trafficked.

### **The Human Trafficking National Coordination Center**

In September 2005, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police established the Human Trafficking National Coordination Center (HTNCC). The HTNCC's strategic objective is to provide a focal point for law enforcement in their efforts to combat individuals and criminal organizations involved in human trafficking activities. The HTNCC's priorities include timely sharing of investigative techniques and best practices with domestic and international law enforcement agencies and NGOs, providing assistance and coordination with respect to domestic and international investigations, as well as participating in national and international anti-human trafficking enforcement initiatives.

In 2017, the HTNCC provided training to approximately 80 police officers through the online human trafficking investigator course. The HTNCC also coordinated and led Operation Northern Spotlight, a Canadian law enforcement outreach operation that proactively targets vulnerable persons to identify and assist those that may be at risk of human trafficking. As a result of the investigation, 14 persons were arrested and a total of 21 charges were laid, including trafficking in persons. Police across the country interviewed 324 individuals believed to be at risk and removed six, including two under the age of 18, from exploitive situations.

The HTNCC was also engaged with the RCMP and the Montreal Police Service (Service de Police de la Ville de Montreal) in the "Griffon" initiative to prevent and combat exploitation and human trafficking during the Formula 1 Grand Prix Race held in Montreal, Quebec. This initiative is a combination of public awareness campaigns and intervention operations

by police. In 2017 efforts identified four incidents being investigated as potential human trafficking/sexual exploitation cases.

### **Moving Forward**

The RCMP will continue to leverage and enhance existing domestic and international law enforcement partnerships to advance counter-human trafficking efforts. Focus will be on expanding international networks to identify and investigate human trafficking.