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Thursday, June 11, 2009

—
Chair

The Honourable Hedy Fry

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• (1110)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)): I call to order meeting 27 of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are doing a study of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games and human trafficking.

We welcome our witnesses. From the Department of Citizenship and Immigration we have Rick Stewart, associate assistant deputy minister, operations. From the Royal Canadian Mounted Police we have Superintendent Michel Aubin, director, federal and international operations; Sergeant Marie-Claude Arsenault, non-commissioned officer, national coordination centre. We also have, from the Department of Public Safety, Barry MacKillop, from the law enforcement and border strategies directorate. And from the Canada Border Services Agency we have Megan Imrie, director of the horizontal policy and planning division.

We have a full slate this morning, and then we have a little bit of committee business. I'm going to save the bit of committee business because it's really quite important committee business.

Let us begin. You must know the rules by now. Each group—and there are four groups—has ten minutes, and if there is more than one of you representing the group, you can divide the ten minutes among you. After that, we have a first round of questioning that will take seven minutes each and then a second round that will take five minutes each. However, the question and answer are included in the seven minutes and in the five minutes. So I'm going to ask you to be brief, both as questioners and respondents. Thank you very much.

We will begin with Rick Stewart, associate assistant deputy minister of operations.

Mr. Barry MacKillop (Director General, Law Enforcement and Border Strategies Directorate, Department of Public Safety): Actually, Madam Chair, with your indulgence, I will start this off on behalf of the Department of Public Safety—

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Barry MacKillop: —if for no other reason than that I'm the co-chair of the interdepartmental working group, so I thought I could kick it off with some broad comments, and then we could move to the specifics with my colleagues.

The Chair: You're using executive privilege. Okay.

Mr. Barry MacKillop: Actually, I was roped into it, Madam Chair. You never want to go first, but you do it.

[Translation]

Good morning. I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity today to outline the government's efforts to combat human trafficking in Canada and to address specific concerns that have been raised regarding the upcoming 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

As co-chair of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, my comments will focus primarily on overall efforts to curtail this crime. My colleagues from the public safety portfolio, namely the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canada Border Services Agency, can provide additional background and information on their respective efforts to date to combat human trafficking, leading up to the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Following their remarks, my colleague from Citizenship and Immigration Canada will provide information on the protection of victims and temporary resident permits.

I would like to begin by reiterating the government's commitment to protect our communities, including foreign visitors to Canada, from all forms of exploitation, whether forced labour or sexual exploitation. Human trafficking is truly a horrific crime, and we take this issue very seriously.

[English]

In Canada, our efforts are guided by and consistent with the UN protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Our responses to combat human trafficking are based on the four Ps: preventing trafficking, protecting victims, prosecuting offenders, and partnership-building, both domestically and internationally.

Since 2004, federal efforts have been overseen by the interdepartmental working group on trafficking in persons. As you may be aware, the working group is co-chaired by the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Justice and is comprised of 17 federal departments and agencies. This working group serves as a federal repository of expertise on combatting all forms of human trafficking and to ensure that we have a coordinated and comprehensive approach to this complex issue.

Over the past few years there have been a number of claims in Canada and abroad that major world events, like the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games, provide an opportunity for organized crime and other criminals to profit from the sexual exploitation of women in order to meet an increased demand for sex, in particular. For instance, prior to the 2006 FIFA World Cup, considerable concerns were raised that this event would contribute to a sharp increase in trafficking for sexual exploitation in Germany. At the time, media reports suggested that prostitution would increase and that up to 40,000 women could be trafficked.

Fortunately, independent reviews following the 2006 World Cup found that no increase in human trafficking occurred during or after that sporting event. This is in large part attributed to the proactive efforts of German authorities and non-governmental organizations to prevent this crime and promote awareness.

By assessing the strategies of countries that have hosted major sporting events, we have learned that prevention and awareness initiatives are key to ensuring that events such as the upcoming 2010 winter games in Vancouver and Whistler do not represent an opportunity to exploit people. Specifically, we have learned that targeted training for law enforcement officials and clear protocols for responding to the needs of victims are among the necessary components of a successful strategy to address any potential increase in human trafficking around major sporting events.

We have also examined reports such as the Future Group's report entitled *Faster, Higher, Stronger: Preventing Human Trafficking at the 2010 Olympics*, which makes a number of recommendations, such as deterring trafficking through public education and awareness and deterring trafficking networks through law enforcement responses.

•(1115)

[Translation]

I want to assure you that our approach is consistent with international experience and stakeholder recommendations. For over a year now, the Interdepartmental Working Group on Trafficking in Persons has paid particular attention to ensure that our approach to combat human trafficking address these concerns.

Federal officials have been and will continue to work with their provincial counterparts in British Columbia, including the B.C. Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the RCMP Border Integrity Program in B.C., and the Vancouver Police Department, in order to share information, build on existing strategies and ensure a coordinated response.

Federal working group officials have met with the RCMP Integrated Security Unit and the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games to discuss how best to incorporate federal anti-trafficking measures into overall security planning. We will continue to work in collaboration with them in order to advance prevention efforts.

[English]

On January 15, 2009, the Minister of Public Safety announced a partnership between Public Safety Canada, the RCMP, and the Canadian Crime Stoppers Association to develop a national awareness campaign that will inform the public of the potential

dangers of human trafficking, help the public identify suspected occurrences, and provide information on how to report suspected cases. Through this partnership, the Canadian Crime Stoppers Association will also use its national tip line as a central point for the public to report suspected cases of human trafficking.

Over the past few months, Crime Stoppers has been actively training its call centre employees and its board of directors to identify suspected cases of human trafficking, to raise awareness of the issue in local communities. Simultaneously, Crime Stoppers has been developing promotional materials to raise public awareness about human trafficking, which is expected to be launched in the fall of 2009. Their "blue blindfold" campaign builds on the campaign launched a year ago by Crime Stoppers International and the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre.

Leading up to the Olympics, Crime Stoppers will place a particular emphasis on awareness tools in the Vancouver area. In terms of awareness-building for enforcement officials and other partners, the RCMP human trafficking national coordination centre has developed tools and protocols to facilitate human trafficking investigations and raise awareness in the Vancouver area and B.C. interior, as well as nationally.

My colleague from the RCMP will provide additional information on the measures it's taking in particular in advance of the winter games. As my colleague from the CBSA will shortly explain, in protecting our shared border the CBSA will continue to manage the flow of people and goods to and from Canada prior to, during, and following the winter games.

•(1120)

[Translation]

Madam Chair, there is no greater responsibility for a government than to protect the safety and security of its citizens. As we approach the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, which are only eight months away—and we are well aware of that—we will continue to build on our current efforts to promote awareness, cooperation and coordination of efforts so that the Olympic Games take place in a safe and secure environment for all Canadians and international visitors.

Thank you again for this opportunity, and I would now ask my colleague, Michel Aubin of the RCMP, to say a few words.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: That's very good.

Who will be next?

Monsieur Aubin.

Superintendent Michel Aubin (Director, Federal and International Operations, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee, for the invitation to speak to you today.

[*Translation*]

I am Superintendent Michel Aubin, the Director of the RCMP's Immigration and Passport Branch at national headquarters in Ottawa.

My branch is responsible for human trafficking and human smuggling matters across Canada. I am joined today by my colleague, Sergeant Marie-Claude Arsenault of the RCMP Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre. We are pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you today about the considerable efforts of law enforcement in combatting human trafficking activity before, during and following the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

[*English*]

The RCMP is committed to combating human trafficking, both at home and abroad. In 2005 the RCMP established the Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre, referred to as the HTNCC. It operates on behalf of all law enforcement in Canada, not solely on behalf of the RCMP. The centre develops tools, coordinates national awareness training and anti-trafficking initiatives, develops partnerships, and coordinates intelligence for dissemination among law enforcement agencies in Canada.

Although it is difficult to compare major events planned in Canada with those that occur in other countries, as the laws and circumstances may not correspond, we are aware that individuals may use the Olympics and Paralympic Games to profit from criminal activity. What we have learned is that awareness and prevention are positive factors in mitigating the risk of increased occurrences of human trafficking.

In preparation for the games, the RCMP is conducting a number of activities in the Vancouver area and across Canada. The RCMP, in conjunction with its partners, has developed a human trafficking awareness workshop, which is being delivered to law enforcement people and prosecutors across the country. Workshops were delivered in the Vancouver area in October 2008. Additional workshops are taking place this week in the Vancouver and Victoria area, and more are planned for delivery in October 2009 in the Vancouver area and in various locations in the B.C. interior.

As part of its program, the RCMP has human trafficking awareness coordinators in each of the regional investigative teams dedicated to preventing human trafficking. Key responsibilities of these coordinators include raising awareness among, and developing strong relationships with, law enforcement, government agencies, NGOs, and the public in all provinces and territories. These established networks are critical in enabling police and NGOs to identify and rescue victims of human trafficking. In British Columbia in particular, a strong partnership has been established between the human trafficking coordinator and the provincial office to combat human trafficking. They work together during human trafficking operations to protect identified victims.

Members of the Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre and these coordinators have travelled extensively across Canada and internationally to raise awareness on human trafficking issues. To date, they have trained over 16,000 law enforcement, government, and non-government organizations across Canada on this very issue. They will continue to work closely with partners in British Columbia leading up to the games.

To ensure that members of the law enforcement community, relevant NGOs, and the public are made more aware of this issue, the RCMP has developed a human trafficking awareness tool kit to help identify potential victims as well as their traffickers. The tool kit has been distributed to all law enforcement agencies in Canada as well as to the various NGOs involved in the fight against human trafficking.

For your information, the tool kit contains an awareness video, victim assistance guidelines, posters, a police officer's handbook, a pamphlet, and a contact card. The RCMP has been working with the Canadian Crime Stoppers Association in their effort to launch a human trafficking public awareness campaign. As a result of this partnership, the Crime Stoppers tip-line phone number has been added to all RCMP human trafficking awareness materials.

● (1125)

[*Translation*]

Other ongoing initiatives with international partners include the following: consultation, both nationally and internationally, to learn and share best practices; MOUs being developed; awareness sessions provided to RCMP international liaison officers and law enforcement officers participating in UN missions abroad; and awareness sessions and training provided to law enforcement agencies in other countries regarding specific problems.

[*English*]

The RCMP leads the 2010 Integrated Security Unit Joint Intelligence Group. This unit monitors intelligence on criminal activities related to the Olympics and Paralympic Games, including human trafficking. As I mentioned earlier, the Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre coordinates and disseminates intelligence to law enforcement groups across Canada, including the Integrated Security Unit Joint Intelligence Group.

The RCMP is also currently conducting a national threat assessment to assess the situation in Canada with a focus on international human trafficking. The goal of the threat assessment is to identify criminal organizations involved in human trafficking. This will provide law enforcement with a guide to further direct its resources on this issue.

The RCMP program has members placed strategically in six key areas across Canada, dedicated to combating human smuggling and human trafficking. When human trafficking is detected, units are available to investigate. In British Columbia, leading up to the games, law enforcement is conducting proactive operations to detect human trafficking activities and is responding accordingly to the intelligence activities.

As human trafficking has no borders, law enforcement requires shared strategic priorities and the devotion of resources toward achieving common goals. The RCMP works with its partners to achieve such integration. Given the enormity of the task of keeping Canada safe, especially during major events, a multi-layered and multi-agency approach to enforcement is required.

[Translation]

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to your committee today, and I will be available to answer questions.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much. My goodness, you guys are really efficient.

Who is next?

Madam Imrie.

Ms. Megan Imrie (Director, Horizontal Policy and Planning Division, Canada Border Services Agency): Thank you.

[Translation]

Good morning everyone. Thank you very much for asking me to appear before the committee today.

[English]

My name is Megan Imrie. I am a director within the enforcement branch of the Canada Border Services Agency. I'm very pleased to be here today representing the agency.

I'd like to begin by telling you about how our agency deals with the important issue of trafficking in persons. The CBSA is committed to the Government of Canada's approach to combatting trafficking in persons by detecting and preventing trafficking operations and the transport of victims to Canada.

The CBSA's trafficking in persons—TIP—policy is consistent with our overall mandate of managing Canada's borders and fighting cross-border crime by preventing the irregular movement of people even before they reach Canadian territory.

[Translation]

The Canada Border Services Agency is engaged in multiple initiatives and continues to work with its counterparts in the public safety (PS) portfolio and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to mitigate TIP activities leading up to and during the Olympics.

[English]

The CBSA's responsibilities in relation to combatting TIP include working with overseas partners to combat irregular migration that may include TIP; detecting and intercepting fraudulently obtained documents to help prevent the transportation of potential TIP victims to Canada; and, upon detection of potential trafficking-in-persons victims, assisting in the safety and security of potential victims by separating them from the suspected human traffickers.

The Canada Border Services Agency provides assistance in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking offenders. The CBSA works with key partner agencies in Canada—such as Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, local police agencies, and non-government organizations—to ensure that

victims are provided with the necessary referrals and assistance, including to the CIC for appropriate consideration of immigration status, as warranted.

The CBSA requires that all new border services officers, or BSOs, complete a "People at Risk" workshop as part of their port-of-entry training to prepare them to deal with vulnerable persons. Our migration integrity officers, or MIOs, receive extensive specialized training, including training in passport and document fraud, intelligence collection and reporting, identifying inadmissible persons and threats to national security, and detecting migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

• (1130)

[Translation]

Internally, the Canada Border Services Agency has been preparing for the games for over two years, analyzing its requirements and building the capacities required to facilitate the processing of people and goods and to ensure adherence to border legislation.

The CBSA's internal Olympic and Paralympic task force was formed in October 2008 to lead national and Pacific region efforts to ensure that the agency is effective in helping coordinate core infrastructure.

[English]

The Canada Border Services Agency has no information that would indicate an increase in human trafficking directly in relation to the Olympics. That being said, the CBSA will have plans and measures in place to ensure the overall readiness of the organization. To ensure the security of our borders, the CBSA, in collaboration with security partners, uses a variety of risk assessment tools and programs.

Two of the advanced systems we have in place are the advance passenger information program and the integrated primary inspection line. These tools are used to screen everyone seeking to enter Canada. In addition, there is an accreditation program in place for family and participants in the 2010 games. CBSA is an active member of the interdepartmental working group on trafficking in persons as well as a working group on TIP and the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. In support of the interdepartmental working group's efforts in mitigating trafficking in persons, experts—including from the CBSA—deliver TIP awareness sessions to our own CBSA officers and other law enforcement officers across Canada as part of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police national human trafficking workshop, which you've heard about from my colleague. From 2008 to present, CBSA officers have participated in workshops in 17 Canadian cities.

[Translation]

Building on the “pushing out our borders” concept, the Olympic and Paralympic task force has allocated funding to the migration integrity officer program to enhance the capacity to intercept improperly documented passengers headed to Canada; to airline personnel training to screen and identify inadmissible passengers; and to intelligence gathering activities. This will allow CBSA to prevent potential victims from being exploited by traffickers in Canada.

[English]

The CBSA recently published a policies and procedures manual on TIP in February 2009. The manual is now available to all our CBSA officers and is designed to assist our officers in detecting, intercepting, and dealing with instances of human trafficking, including the proper referral protocols and necessary contact information. In addition, the CBSA enforcement branch recently established a national human trafficking network. It is made up of regional intelligence officers who will participate in monthly conference calls in order to share information and build expertise across Canada.

Finally, the CBSA will be ramping up capacity in the Pacific region to perform primary, secondary, and enforcement activities at affected ports of entry. Specific investments have been made in Vancouver marine operations, where additional resources will be made available to perform increased vessel rummages and crew-passenger verifications leading up to and during the games. We have also expanded our intelligence capacity by increasing the presence of intelligence officers in the region. We will also be relocating approximately 100 CBSA officers to impacted locations in Pacific region and additional staff to Pearson International Airport in Toronto.

I have no doubt that the increased vigilance made possible by the current programs I have described will mitigate the risk of human trafficking at the Olympics.

[Translation]

TIP is a serious problem, and the CBSA remains committed to working domestically and within the global community to combat it. The CBSA will continue to work closely with international partners to stem the problem at its source. The CBSA will assist in the identification of possible TIP victims by ensuring that foreign nationals seeking entry to Canada have proper travel documents, and are entering Canada for a genuine and a lawful purpose.

•(1135)

[English]

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

And now Mr. Stewart.

Mr. Rick Stewart (Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the committee.

My name is Rick Stewart, and I am the associate assistant deputy minister of operations at Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

[Translation]

I want to thank the committee for this opportunity to provide an overview of CIC's contribution to combatting human trafficking.

I know there is considerable focus on the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, and I understand the challenges they present in combatting this crime. Having said that, it is important to note that any meaningful and lasting progress in the fight against human trafficking demands constant vigilance.

To that end, CIC works with many partners on an ongoing basis to combat this crime, and we will continue to do so during the games and long after they are over.

[English]

CIC works routinely with many partners, including our colleagues at the Department of Public Safety, the RCMP, the Canada Border Services Agency, and other law enforcement agencies, to combat human trafficking, raise awareness of this crime, and prosecute the offenders.

With respect to the protection of victims, CIC's involvement begins when a person comes forward, either on their own or referred to us by a non-governmental organization like a women's shelter or a law enforcement agency such as the RCMP. Our main role in this is to ensure victims receive appropriate consideration for immigration status, as individual circumstances warrant.

In 2006, in response to the unique needs of victims, the government introduced guidelines that would allow temporary resident permits to be issued to foreign national victims of trafficking. These guidelines allowed immigration officers to issue a short-term temporary resident permit, free of charge, of up to 120 days, to foreign national victims of human trafficking in Canada. The intent of this permit was to provide them with temporary legal immigration status in Canada.

In 2007 the government extended the length of this short-term permit to 180 days in order to allow victims to apply for a work permit, an option that had been unavailable to them under the 120-day permit.

[Translation]

When a temporary resident permit is issued to a victim in Canada, CIC officers help the victim to contact appropriate groups, including the embassy of their home country, provincial and municipal agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

This permit gives them a chance to escape from the influence of their trafficker, and the opportunity to begin to recover from their ordeal with assistance, including health-care benefits and trauma counselling, through the interim federal health program.

It also gives them time to reflect on what they want to do next, whether they choose to seek to remain in Canada or return to their home country. They may also consider participating in an investigation or prosecution if they so choose.

Longer-term temporary resident permits can also be issued for up to three years, where individual circumstances warrant. Victims may also apply for permanent residence under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, through, for example, the permit holders' class, an application for humanitarian and compassionate consideration, or the refugee-determination process.

As well, Madam Chair, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act includes penalties of up to life imprisonment and fines of up to one million dollars for conviction of trafficking in persons.

• (1140)

[English]

Our commitment to protecting victims of human trafficking remains consistent, regardless of the manner they arrived in Canada, including in relation to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Nevertheless, given that the Olympics represent a high-profile target for both victims and offenders, we are taking a number of additional steps. We are educating temporary foreign workers and other visitors on how to avoid such exploitation, by distributing brochures and posters, available in five languages, which outline workers' basic rights in Canada and inform foreign nationals of our labour standards.

We will also boost international awareness of Canada's commitment to protecting victims by including these brochures with the Olympic workforce applications. This effort will add to the volume of material we already distribute in our overseas missions and, with our partners at CBSA, at Canadian ports of entry.

We are also engaged in outreach to the hospitality and construction industries, as well as other employers, to raise awareness of their responsibility to ensure workers are protected against exploitation. And we are contacting first responders, such as health care, social services, settlement agencies, and shelters in British Columbia, about temporary resident permits that are available for the victims of trafficking.

No country is immune to this crime. CIC's measures open the door to important services for victims of trafficking. We recognize this is a serious problem, and we are committed to working closely with our partners in a concerted effort to raise awareness and actively support victims of this crime.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. My goodness, you guys are really efficient. That's all I have to say.

We'll start our first round of questions with Ms. Neville.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Thank you.

Let me begin by thanking every one of you for coming here today. It's certainly much appreciated.

You're undoubtedly aware that this committee has been following this issue for some time. As I listened to you, and having been around this committee for a while, I'm struck at the exceptional energy and commitment you have put into trying to address this issue. I certainly thank you and commend you for that.

I have a number of questions, but a couple of them that came to me I thought you may not want to answer in public, so I will go back to my other ones.

I attended a summit in Vancouver not too long ago, as others did, organized by a collection of about 25 community groups in Vancouver, very much focused on the 2010 Olympics and human trafficking. Their focus was on protection, prosecution, and prevention of human trafficking. Do you work with these groups in Vancouver? When I listened to your presentations, there was not a lot of discussion on the protection of the victim, or services to the victim, other than a temporary resident permit. Perhaps you could speak to that a little bit, and not too long, because I don't have much time and I have other questions.

Supt Michel Aubin: I'll start.

In terms of the protection of the victims, that was in fact a key purpose of the awareness material that's distributed to everybody. When we talk about our four Ps, as well as partnerships, it's partnerships with non-governmental organizations. So when these incidents do happen, the protection of victims is key, is paramount. The RCMP or law enforcement agencies are aware of it, and that's taken over by CIC and non-governmental organizations to make sure their security is addressed, their needs are addressed. I'll let CIC speak to that.

A small issue you touched upon here is the protection of those victims. That protection can go all the way to the extent of entering into the witness protection program, if there's a need. So when we're talking about staying in Canada and potentially testifying down the road, that protection can be extended all the way to the witness protection program.

• (1145)

Hon. Anita Neville: I'm not being critical of you, I want to make that quite clear, but when I attended, much of the discussion focused on the insufficient resources and supports available to victims. From your perspective, could more be done?

Sergeant Marie-Claude Arsenault (Non-Commissioned Officer, Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Particularly in B.C., with our partnership with the B.C. office to combat human trafficking, I would say a very good system is in place to address the needs of the victim. The partnership is very well established, so before an investigation or an operation is undertaken, meetings are taking place to ensure the security of the victims during the operation.

In British Columbia, there's a very good system. Also, throughout the country there's already a good system in place, in which our coordinators are participating to ensure protection.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you.

Maybe it's the way we asked the question, but I was struck by how much of your discussion focused on the international trafficking of women. Could you elaborate a little bit more on what initiatives you have in place for the internal trafficking of women from across the country, focusing on Vancouver?

Supt Michel Aubin: Okay.

Hon. Anita Neville: Let me back up. I think those of us who were on the committee at the time.... Maybe I'll just speak for myself: I was stunned to hear at the time that Vancouver is deemed a sex destination city, with or without the Olympics. I don't know whether you would agree with that, but that was certainly what somebody from the Vancouver Police Department told us at the time. I'm interested to know what you're doing to combat or address it internally as well as internationally.

Supt Michel Aubin: In terms of destinations, we have a threat assessment that's going on right now, which will give us an idea of where the problem lies. The advance result right now is that Vancouver is one of the areas, but not the sole area in Canada.

In relation to domestic or international, from an RCMP and enforcement perspective, we recognize there is international trafficking and there is domestic trafficking. But in terms of addressing the problem, we address both sides of the problem with the same vigour. The issue here is that individuals are being trafficked and exploited. There are victims, but it's a matter of how we structure the investigation if it's international compared to domestic. The RCMP and other law enforcement will address both of them.

Hon. Anita Neville: Are there any other comments on that?

Mr. Barry MacKillop: I would add that from the interdepartmental working group perspective, we are also using some money that we received from budget 2006. It's the \$6 million to fund research and other programs. We're looking at supporting a couple of areas with OCTIP, the B.C. office. We work very closely with them. In fact, they're part of our subcommittee on the interdepartmental working group. We have a subcommittee that looks specifically at the Olympics issue and we work with OCTIP. Also, there's an organization called Supporting Women Alternatives Network, SWAN, in B.C. and Vancouver. We're looking at helping them with one of their programs, as well as working with the Métis group and aboriginals.

Hon. Anita Neville: I have a quick question. I know my time is running out.

You've put a number of initiatives in place. Are you seeing the difference?

Mr. Barry MacKillop: We're certainly seeing a difference in the information sharing, awareness, and collaboration. These initiatives have been in place for a relatively short period of time, and it's hard to gauge the long-term results on them, but we are certainly seeing a difference in the level of awareness, the level of cooperation, and the desire to work together across what are typically jurisdictional boundaries—provincial, federal, and non-governmental. People are coming together to work on it. From that perspective, we are seeing results.

Hon. Anita Neville: Are you keeping data?

Mr. Barry MacKillop: We're keeping the data on the specific projects, yes, data on human trafficking.

The Chair: Ms. Neville, I'm sorry.

Hon. Anita Neville: I know, I'm pushing the envelope.

The Chair: You pushed it by a minute.

Madame Demers.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for appearing before the committee today.

Those of you who were here during the last Parliament may recall that during the 2006 election campaign, I discovered that a young Ethiopian woman was being kept against her will in a residence in Laval. We contacted the RCMP officers in Laval, and they did a very good job dealing with the situation. The people in question were arrested and prosecuted, but the judge found them not guilty. Indeed, it is very difficult to prove forcible confinement, as well as coercion.

When we commence proceedings in such situations, sections 279.01 to 279.04 of the Criminal Code provide us with tools, but I think there are some shortcomings. Indeed, if it is not possible to charge those who bring people into the country for trafficking purposes, either for prostitution or forced labour, the prevention that you do in the field and the fact that suspects are apprehended do not count for much.

How can we change the law so that it is more effective?

Mr. Stewart, could you tell me how many people have benefited to date from the various measures established by Immigration Canada?

● (1150)

Supt Michel Aubin: With regard to the investigations and legal proceedings, I am aware of what happened in Laval, Ms. Demers. We are doing a great deal to make the police forces as well as the federal and provincial Crown prosecutors more aware of these problems. I will not speak about that particular case, but it goes without saying that prosecutions always depend on the evidence that has been gathered. I do not think that we should use this particular case as an example that would apply throughout all of Canada. However, I can tell you that a few years ago, there were five convictions in Canada. Currently, 17 cases involving trafficking in persons are before Canadian courts. The situation is improving thanks to greater awareness and training.

One must also take into account that the Criminal Code is not the only legislation that applies. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act also contains provisions that can be used for international cases. It is up to the prosecutor to determine what charges can be laid, in keeping with the evidence that has been gathered. One of the tasks that our coordination centre does is to train police officers to investigate such crimes so as to prove forcible confinement and coercion.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Currently, how much trafficking in persons is there in Canada and in Quebec?

Supt Michel Aubin: The RCMP is currently assessing the threat and the level of such crimes. However, the goal is to identify criminal organizations that are involved and to determine where we should be focusing our efforts. I am having discussions with other representatives of the RCMP in the provinces as well as with representatives of municipal police forces to determine how we can do more to tackle this problem. We have begun to conduct joint operations that go beyond what we did in the past. We mustn't limit ourselves to what is going on at the front door, so to speak, namely procuring and prostitution. Rather, we should be investigating what is going on at the back of the house. We are currently making such efforts.

I am not a lawyer, but I think that this legislation is young. Nonetheless, Canadian police forces are paying a lot of attention to this problem.

Ms. Nicole Demers: How many people were apprehended last year?

Supt Michel Aubin: According to the statistics I have here, last year there were five convictions. At present, 17 cases of specific charges of trafficking in persons are before the courts. Thirteen other cases for 2008-2009 involved charges related to trafficking in persons.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Do these cases involve one victim or several?

Supt Michel Aubin: It may be one victim or multiple victims. It depends on the case.

Ms. Nicole Demers: So a fairly large number of people are involved.

Mr. Stewart, can you answer my question?

• (1155)

Mr. Rick Stewart: Yes. Regarding the number of people who receive services, between May 2006 and December 2008, 44 people were referred to CIC so that their situation could be assessed. Eighteen of them received a temporary resident permit, and half of those later had their permit renewed. As for the other people, there were various reasons why they did not obtain a permit. Some of them did not turn up for the interview, while others followed a different procedure to apply as an immigrant. In some cases, our officers determined that the person was not truly a victim of trafficking in persons.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Can you tell us today whether the people that you helped were able to settle here? Or did they have to return to their country of origin?

Mr. Rick Stewart: Unfortunately, I don't have that information.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Is there any long-term monitoring or follow-up?

Mr. Rick Stewart: That is part of the situation.

Furthermore, there are privacy issues at play. I'm sorry.

[English]

The Chair: You have gone over your time.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

The Chair: I can give you ten seconds, if you like, to match you with Madam Neville.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Mr. MacKillop, often people say that the Olympic Games are not prestigious enough, so it is less likely that there will be any trafficking in persons during the games, in comparison with other, more prestigious events such as the Formula 1 Grand Prix or a film festival. Is that true?

Mr. Barry MacKillop: Unfortunately, I do not have any information that would allow us to compare those two events. We just know that during sporting events, up until now, we have not seen any increase in trafficking in persons. However, at least this allows us to channel our efforts.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madame Demers.

Madame Boucher.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Thank you very much for coming here today.

As the mother of two young daughters, this issue is of particular concern to me. I know that our government believes in the importance of protecting the victims of crime. That is why the government has adopted measures to take into account the unique concerns of victims.

I have several questions. I could spend the morning talking to you, because I find this issue extremely interesting. We have established a number of measures to combat trafficking in persons in particular. One of these is protection, either through the RCMP, border services or all the other organizations that are working on this issue and that are aware of the special needs of victims. You are attaching greater importance to protection.

How do these priorities come into play in day-to-day reality? Have you any examples to share with the committee? Sometimes you find yourselves dealing with a victim of human trafficking. Is it difficult for a victim to trust the police or other entities, after everything that she has experienced? I would like someone to answer that question, because I find this important.

Ms. Megan Imrie: I can give you a general answer, but I do not have a specific example. However, I can tell you that protecting the victims is very important, because these situations are very difficult. In our case, our officers do interact with possible victims of human trafficking. For this reason, we have drafted a guide and created a training course to make our officers more aware of the victim-based approach. They must be made more aware of this very difficult situation. As a result, our officers will be better equipped to deal with a truly delicate situation.

• (1200)

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: That's good.

Mr. Aubin, you must have had dealings with victims. How do they react?

Supt Michel Aubin: I am going to ask Marie-Claude Arseneault to answer that question, because she has more experience than I do in this field.

Sgt Marie-Claude Arseneault: Indeed, dealing with victims is one of the greatest challenges faced by law enforcement officers. They must try to obtain the cooperation of the victims, because often they do not trust the authorities, particularly in the case of foreign victims. They have been intimidated, there has been coercion, and they are afraid of their trafficker. It is difficult for them to talk about what happened with police officers. They are distrustful. We see various emotions. Some victims feel shame. For a number of reasons, it is hard for the victims to talk to police officers.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: How do you protect the victims in real life? What protection do they receive?

Supt Michel Aubin: Of course, protecting the victims is the first priority, not necessarily prosecution, even for police forces. In these cases, and during operations—there recently was an operation in Vancouver—we contact the organizations that can meet the victims' needs in advance. It may be medical care, social assistance, whatever. Police forces do not specialize in these areas. So we ask the various agencies to be there for these victims.

I can tell you, drawing upon quite a broad range of experience, that often the victims get first aid, and in many cases, they go back to work for their own reasons. Often they do not realize what circles they are moving in, and they go back.

The agencies are there, primarily at the municipal and provincial levels, to take care of these victims. As for the success rate, I am not aware of any specific studies. So that is really all I can tell you.

As I was saying earlier, thanks to the program and the tools that we developed for police forces, we do know that these women, these victims of the sex trade, do not initially see themselves as victims. We have to work with them for a while before they see themselves as victims, because the coercion techniques of the traffickers are rather complex and elaborate. So, we have to work with the victims so they realize that they are victims, and in this way, we can help them move ahead, take charge of their lives and make progress, so that they do not go back to prostitution.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: How do ordinary people or anyone here—members of Parliament working on the issues, or myself, as a mother—recognize, even partially, whether or not girls are the victims of human trafficking? As ordinary citizens, how can we recognize this phenomenon?

• (1205)

Supt Michel Aubin: That is a pretty tough question. I share your concerns, because I too have two daughters. So I will give you my personal opinion, if you don't mind.

Of course, we should always know what our daughters are up to and who their friends are. Communication is not always easy, depending on the age of the children, but parents must be aware of what their daughters are doing. That is the reality of it. It all boils down to communicating. That is all I can tell you, but that is my own personal opinion.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Thank you very much, Mr. Aubin. That is very interesting.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're kind of going to eight minutes for everybody.

Irene Mathysen.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much for being here. We appreciate your expertise, and I think we're reassured that there are provisions in place on trafficking in general.

In my community there has been a great deal of concern about preparations for the 2010 Olympics. The Sisters of St. Joseph, the Salvation Army, and a very effective group of women in London, Ontario, have been engaged in this for quite some time. So I thank you for the work and the effort.

I want to start with Superintendent Aubin. You talked about the victims and the difficulty communicating to them that they are indeed victims. I suppose there's a lot of self-recrimination, in the sense that they perhaps feel they deserve what is happening to them. How do you help those victims recognize that they are indeed victims and not criminals, particularly when the police are involved? A lot of them may associate the police with criminality.

Supt Michel Aubin: I would say that it is not an easy question, and I'll do my best here.

We recognize that the law enforcement community that deals with it—CBSA deals with it, as well, from a border perspective—recognizes that these victims have had difficulties.

I'll borrow a little from my personal experience. I've done undercover work for six strong years, so I know what it is to face or deal with the ladies who are involved in this milieu. Many of them have other issues that lead them to this type of activity, and they get stuck in it. They're being controlled and are not necessarily recognizing it. Some other problems they may have may be family issues. There may be substance abuse. There are many things at play, and I can tell you that the law enforcement agencies, the police officers, are not equipped to deal with their needs afterwards. Our job is to direct them towards those organizations that can deal with them.

The challenge—CBSA would have a similar challenge—when we confront them is getting them to appreciate what they're involved in. If we're trying to get a better understanding of what's going on with the traffickers who are behind it and are controlling them, trying to get that from them is a challenge, because they often don't recognize them as such. They view the trafficker as a close friend, if not a boyfriend or something along those lines. It's breaking that link between them. Getting them to overcome and cooperate is a difficulty.

I can't speak on behalf of CBSA and how they do it at the borders.

Ms. Megan Imrie: Can I jump in?

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Absolutely.

Ms. Megan Imrie: I would just echo what my colleague has said. I think it's awareness of how to ask the right questions and knowing what the right questions are. It's also the listening, the probing, and some of the non-verbals, as well. From our perspective, a lot of it revolves around questioning documents, countries, and destinations and that type of thing. It's establishing those. It's knowing the right questions to ask and really listening, in the sense of being in an open environment.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: It's trying to make it less frightening.

Mr. Rick Stewart: If I can just add one thing to everything my colleagues have said, I think this is where the importance of the promotion and advertising comes in. The challenge is to get them to come forward and into the door in the first place. When they come in the door, we have an empathetic, welcoming style. We train all our officials intensively in that.

That's where the posters come in, right? They are raising awareness that there is some place you can go. You do not have to fear the Government of Canada officials if you find yourself in these circumstances. We are there to help. The more we can promote that and make people aware, the more they may remember seeing somewhere that they can get help if they find themselves in a circumstance. And maybe they'll go forward.

That's just to twin up everything that's been said.

• (1210)

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay.

Mr. Stewart, in your remarks you said that you're engaged in outreach to the hospitality and construction industries as well as to employers to raise awareness of the responsibility of those employers to make sure that workers are protected from exploitation. I was doing a little background. In preparation for the Olympics in London in 2012, the British national spokesman, in regard to combatting human trafficking, indicated that initiatives will be taken to educate Olympic workers about the trafficking industry, the perils, and how it exploits domestic and foreign women.

I'm wondering if you could describe it. You've made mention of the initiatives being taken to educate the workers who will be in Vancouver for the 2010 Olympics.

Mr. Rick Stewart: Certainly. We expect that there will be a fair number of foreign nationals who will come to work at the Olympics. We're working closely with all our partners and the Olympic organizers to make sure that we have the mechanisms in place to effectively contact the employers and to effectively contract the individuals they are hiring and bringing into the country to work.

As part of that regular engagement with foreign workers in general, we make sure that we provide them with information through that whole application processing effort. We provide them with information about the rules and laws of our country and the labour code requirements so that they know what their rights, privileges, and responsibilities are coming here as foreign workers. Piggybacking, if you will, on what we already do with foreign workers to make sure that they are aware of the circumstances they're coming into in a work environment, we will use that regular avenue to share with them these specific pamphlets about the risk of human trafficking.

We have an existing avenue, and we will use it more fully to share broader-based information as it's developed and as it's appropriate.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

How am I doing, Madam Chair?

The Chair: I'll give you a minute.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Ms. Imrie, did you want to comment?

Ms. Megan Imrie: I was just going to add—it may already have been mentioned—that there will be posters and information at the ports of entry as well, so the arriving travellers and workers would be aware of that information.

Mr. Rick Stewart: It's very much a multiple borders entry. How many times can we raise awareness with that first contact, the next contact, and then the ongoing monitoring they're actually here?

Supt Michel Aubin: If I may add to that as well, awareness is one issue, but I think an important point to note is that when these things happen, the NGOs, the organizations that specialize in victim management, are there. It's not as if the victim is let go into the streets after dealing with the officials. We bring them in and they know that they're right there to carry through.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: I was also thinking of the people who are working on site, such as the construction workers and the technicians. Their awareness that they could be participating in a crime is important too.

The Chair: An eight-second answer.

Supt Michel Aubin: Yes.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: That was very good.

Now we'll begin our second round, with Madame Zarac.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.): Good afternoon, and thank you very much for coming here today.

The topic today is very disturbing. On the weekend, I saw the movie *Taken*; it is a hard-hitting movie even though I realize that the movie was made in Hollywood and that not all fathers are like Rambo. All your activities and your efforts confirm in my mind that some parts of the movie I saw are true to life. You would not take all these precautions for years just to... I imagine that you realize that you are dealing with strong organizations that are well equipped.

You have talked a great deal about international trafficking in persons, so I suppose that my feelings come mainly from that part of the situation, but I know that victims are moved around as well. I spoke to some police officers in Montreal, so I know that some victims are moved from one part of the country to another, as well. What have you done about that aspect? Have you contacted other police forces?

You mentioned four pillars, and the first one of these pillars is prevention. This is such an awful thing to say, and I almost don't dare ask this question, but do you expect that some women will go missing in upcoming months because there will be recruitment? What is being done in that regard? Young and very innocent girls easily fall into traps. What can be done to make sure that does not happen? Are you talking to students in schools? I think we must also raise the awareness of parents, because often they think that this kind of thing only happens to other people's children and do not prepare for such situations. What kind of prevention is being done, working with parents and young girls, or perhaps I should say with young children?

I want to ask all my questions, so I will have to be quick about it.

I know that police officers are being recruited from elsewhere, because there will not be enough officers on site in Vancouver. Some police officers will be sent there for a month. Is expertise in human trafficking among the various criteria used to select these police officers? If not, what training will they be given?

● (1215)

Supt Michel Aubin: I will begin by answering your question about police officers. We recognize the difference between international human trafficking and domestic human trafficking, but as I said earlier, police forces deal with these two kinds of trafficking together. They are one particular kind of crime, and often when we investigate a particular crime, that is the point at which we determine whether the victim is from outside the country or from Canada. So we deal with these two different kinds of human trafficking together. As I also mentioned earlier, we are currently having discussions with a number of police forces, including the Montreal city police, in order to do a better job of targeting and defining our work in this field. I cannot give you any more details about that; I will stop there.

As for prevention, I will ask Ms. Arsenaault to answer your question, because she is the expert in that field.

Sgt Marie-Claude Arsenaault: I would like to add that our awareness-raising efforts include both kinds of human trafficking, international and domestic. So all our materials and all our information deal with both international and domestic trafficking in persons. And when we travel across Canada to raise the awareness of law enforcement officers, we do so in an integrated fashion, with federal partners, provincial partners and municipal police. We make law enforcement officers at all three levels—federal, provincial and municipal—more aware of both domestic human trafficking and international human trafficking. These activities target all levels of law enforcement.

What was the second question?

Supt Michel Aubin: It was about prevention.

As it now stands, we need to raise awareness beyond policy authorities. We use the same formula for NGOs, so that they in turn can also raise awareness, which has a snowball effect. In a way, we educate those who will be doing the educating.

Should we raise awareness in schools? That is certainly an issue the coordination centre should look at. However, we will have to assess our resources. We have focused our efforts on police forces

and prosecutors because they work on the front lines. We are working in collaboration with the Canada Border Services Agency and CIC. We work as a team. We are in the process of training the front-line workers, in other words, those who are the first to be involved in a case.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank the people who are presenting here today.

I think this is an extremely important issue. I was on this committee when we did the study on human trafficking, and it's an issue that's more horrendous and devastating than many of us ever thought when we started into it.

I want to pay tribute to my colleague Joy Smith, who has done so much work on this file and has worked with many of you as well. My thanks to her and Anita Neville, who had the foresight to bring this motion forward so that we could get this update from you. I think it's extremely important for the Standing Committee on the Status of Women to know what's happening, and I think it's also important to have you back again, either closer to the date or after, so we can follow up on what legislative tools we may need to put in place to continue this endeavour to make our women and children safer. I think that's something we need to be looking at.

When we studied this issue, awareness was one of the things that came to the forefront. People were not aware that this was happening in this country—it happened somewhere else but not in Canada. I've heard a lot of things here this morning that have raised the level of awareness on this issue. I know in my community, as in Ms. Mathysen's, there is a group that has made the commitment to make the public more aware of human trafficking. They're involved with the NGOs in the community and with the local police force. Cooperation among the agencies is also improving. When we did this study, there was very little cooperation among the agencies. Everybody was operating in silos, and what I'm seeing here today is very encouraging—everybody is working together.

We know that there are domestic and international issues, but one of our big issues has to do with the aboriginal community in British Columbia. Is anything being done by any of your groups to address the aboriginals?

● (1220)

Supt Michel Aubin: I will come back to the functions of the Human Trafficking Coordination Centre, which are carried out by the RCMP with its partners. We've been delivering awareness sessions to many groups, but there have been some sessions for groups that deal with aboriginal communities. This is done by our regional coordinators, of which there are six. They reach out to communities. We're not targeting aboriginal communities, but we've had sessions with them, directly through some groups, and indirectly through some of the NGOs. In Winnipeg and across the prairies, where we have a higher incidence of aboriginal communities, a lot of effort has gone into reaching as many people as possible. This is something that's still going on.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Madam Chair, do I have a couple of more seconds?

The Chair: Thirty seconds.

Mr. Barry MacKillop: I'll be quick.

At the Department of Public Safety we do a fair bit of work with the Akwesasne community as well. Last year we did give them some additional money as part of our Akwesasne partnership initiative to combat organized crime and to look at issues of human trafficking in the community as well. And as part of our call letter for research or programs to address the issue this year, we did receive a very promising proposal from the Métis Child and Family Services Society in Edmonton.

We are aware of it. We are concerned at the possibility, as with any other issues, of being focused on any particular community, and we want to ensure that we have the awareness there that we can assist them in preventing the crime as well as addressing it.

Crime Stoppers will certainly not be limited to communities other than aboriginal communities. It will include all communities. And their campaigns and awareness campaigns will be done as well as their local Crime Stoppers, visiting with communities and sharing the information with parents as well as with people who work in the area and with NGOs.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Monsieur Desnoyers.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

First, it seems that tools have been put in place to disseminate information, to communicate, and to focus on prevention and education.

Mr. Stewart might be able to respond to the first question. You talked about 44 cases spread out over a relatively long time frame, from 2006 to 2008, or something along those lines. You said that a certain number of people involved in those cases were not victims.

How do you communicate amongst yourselves? You mentioned five cases involving convictions and ten or so others where discussions took place; were these referred to the RCMP?

My second question concerns resources. Several of you talked about shifting resources and providing training using existing resources. By focusing on this problem, would other sectors involving the protection of Canadians suffer? How much money has been set aside for each of your organizations to deal with human trafficking in an effective manner?

•(1225)

Mr. Rick Stewart: Thank you, Mr. Desnoyers.

If I understand correctly, you would like to know how agents from our department cooperate and work with RCMP officers.

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: It is in relation to the number of cases you mentioned. You said that 44 people had been referred to you, but that a certain number of them were not victims. When you investigate these cases, is the RCMP aware of that?

Mr. Rick Stewart: Unfortunately, I don't have those details here, but I will get you that information, which is of a practical, day-to-day nature, and provide it to the committee.

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: Can we get that information?

Supt Michel Aubin: Of course.

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: Can you answer my question?

Supt Michel Aubin: I would like to provide you with more information. On a preliminary basis, I was told that the TRPs, the temporary resident permits, are not directly linked to the convictions made in Canada to date. But we would have to look into that.

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: You said there have been 5 convictions and that between 10 and 15 others were underway. This applies to 2008 or perhaps a little before then. One of you said that at the FIFA tournament, 40,000 women were at risk of being exploited. But it would not only be women, but children as well. We have heard about children who work in construction or who do domestic work. It really is a wide-ranging issue.

Are we working on all fronts at the same time, or are we limiting ourselves to the 2010 Games?

Supt Michel Aubin: I will tell you about our resources. We are not moving any resources to deal with that issue. As far as the immigration and passport program is concerned, we are giving top priority to the issue of human trafficking. I also mentioned that our intelligence branch is currently assessing the threat, which will allow me to make sure that our resources are where they should be on the ground. Of course, we are allocating our resources based on what our priorities are. If we learn that human trafficking is going on, I can assure you that we will make that our priority because victims are involved. It would become a priority case. It is a matter of managing the organization's activities.

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: There are no additional resources, nor funding.

Supt Michel Aubin: Yes, there are additional resources. Mr. MacKillop could answer that question.

We used part of the budget we were given to create the Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre, which serves all police forces, and in particular, the coordinators of the six teams in place in Canada that will focus on prevention. For instance, I can tell you that prevention is an extremely important "p". Even though we can be even more effective in the way we conduct our investigations and our prosecutions, it goes without saying that there should always be an emphasis on prevention. For example, Canadian society was focused on prevention with regard to drinking and driving.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Given that it's 12:30, and what we have to discuss shouldn't take us that long, we could do one more round of three minutes. I'm going to be rigid about my three minutes. Would you like to do that?

I'm sorry, we still have Irene and Cathy. We may not be able to do a third round.

Irene.

•(1230)

Ms. Irene Mathysen: I must say, you confused me for a moment there.

The Chair: I'm sorry.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: That's okay.

There was discussion about efforts being made to reach out to first nations communities on the protections that young women and children might need in that regard, so talking to those communities directly. I know that the Native Women's Association of Canada is very involved with their Sisters in Spirit campaign. I'm wondering if there's a connection between what NWAC is doing and what you're doing in regard to communicating to young aboriginal women.

I'm also wondering about the 520 missing and murdered women. Not all of those cases have been solved. There's a great lack of clarity on what happened to those women. I'm wondering if there are any ongoing investigations regarding these women being trafficked. Are they missing because someone has taken them and exploited them? Are there any plans to pursue that?

Sgt Marie-Claude Arseneault: In terms of the outreach with aboriginal groups, again, some of our regional coordinators have done some outreach and have met specifically with the Native Women's Association of Canada. They have presented some information sessions on trafficking. It is being done at the local level with our coordinators.

As far as the awareness within law enforcement, we designed a human trafficking workshop with our partners. As I mentioned earlier, we're travelling the country delivering these workshops with federal, provincial, and municipal partners. We also have somebody from Status of Women Canada who makes a presentation during those workshops and comes with very shocking statistics on what you're discussing, the missing aboriginal women. It's an awareness, again, because often it wasn't linked to trafficking. It's to bring it to the forefront and to be able to recognize that there is a possibility that they're a vulnerable group and that they could have been trafficked.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Yes.

Mr. Barry MacKillop: I would just add that we certainly don't limit our efforts to the federal departments in what we can do. There was a question on how many resources we have dedicated to this. What we try to do, and are trying to do through our efforts, is basically leverage all Canadians, whether it's local police or whether it's everyone, to assist in this issue. We do this with other serious crimes such as child sexual exploitation, where we always have our resources and the way we implement them is to try to leverage everything.

We do have federal-provincial-territorial groups that look at this, and we reach out to the local communities in terms of sharing that awareness of prevention and that education. We do try to maximize what we have and to leverage what's out there to get as many eyes as possible across Canada and across the world on this issue, because it is a serious issue.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women has suggested that sometimes, with all of the heightened awareness and hype, the media gets involved and there are other consequences that may not be quite so favourable. For example,

migrants might be prevented from coming into the country—quite legitimate people might encounter difficulties. I'm wondering if that's a concern you have. If so, what do we need to do to protect migrants from that kind of repercussion?

Mr. Rick Stewart: Are you referring to exploitive consultants, if you will, or third-party intermediaries who are trying to bring individuals here to the country and what we can do against them?

Ms. Irene Mathysen: No, I'm—

Mr. Rick Stewart: In terms of our business abroad, our immigration officers are trained. Their day-to-day job is to evaluate what we refer to as the bona fides of somebody's intended purpose in coming here. Are they really who they say they are? When they indicate that they're coming here, is their story credible, and does it really seem to be why they're coming here? Is there a sense that they're being coerced to come here? That's the day-to-day business of our immigration officers for whatever applicant comes in, whatever applications we receive.

That's why in working closely with our partners, the training tools that they're using specific to human trafficking are important for our officers to have as well. We do the same training with them, so they are trained to identify the signals or the things to look for. They are trained to know how to engage with people in order to get answers from individuals as to their real purpose for coming here. Through that process, we're trying to discern whether somebody is being forced to come here against their will, and, if they are, to make them aware that there are alternate opportunities for them.

•(1235)

The Chair: Sorry, Ms. Mathysen, your time is up.

Ms. McLeod.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

As someone who is relatively new to trying to understand this issue, I've really appreciated hearing from you today. If I have time, my colleague would also like to have a minute or two.

We know that our colleague has introduced a private member's bill, but are there any other legislative gaps that you might know about in terms of helping you deal with this issue effectively?

Supt Michel Aubin: From a law enforcement perspective—and CBSA will probably have some points on that—right now we're working with the legislation. We have legislation under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the Criminal Code, both of which provide us with a wide variety of legislative measures, if you will.

We recently had what we call our national workshop of the people who are working our programs, and there were no issues that were brought to our attention in terms of legislative gaps at this point in time. Our focus right now is working with the prosecutors to get them engaged and understand these provisions, and looking at these cases to see where human trafficking offences could apply, as compared to other offences, such as prostitution and what not. Right now, our efforts are toward working with the legislation.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Thank you.

Mr. Rick Stewart: Perhaps I can add to that.

The changes I spoke about, which we introduced in 2006 and 2007, we did through a combination of what we call ministerial instructions and the use of the discretionary provisions that are in the existing Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to make changes or put in place directions to our officers in the field for public policy reasons.

Our act has a fair degree of discretion that can be exercised in certain circumstances, and we used that discretion in recognition of some of the challenges victims were facing, to put in place measures to help address them and help to support their needs. The benefit of using the existing discretions that are in the act is that it gives us a fair degree of flexibility to be able to respond in a timely manner.

We put in place some measures in 2006. As we started to encounter victims, we discovered that the length of time of the permit we were offering to them was not sufficient to fully meet the needs they were facing. So we took the decision to extend the time duration of that permit to offer them a longer period of immigration status. The benefit of extending that time was that it also permitted them the opportunity to apply for a work permit, which hadn't been the case before.

That was done in response to the kinds of challenges we were seeing being faced by individuals. We maintain that flexibility. And as we continually monitor this, if we find that the services we're offering are still not sufficient to address the needs of those victims who are coming forward, we will certainly look at what further changes we may need to make in response.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Hoepfner.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Are victims more likely to speak to law enforcement officials if they know for certain that the predator is in jail, or will be going to jail? Is that a factor in them speaking with law enforcement officials?

Supt Michel Aubin: I think I can approach that question from a more general perspective in terms of law enforcement. We're looking at victims of crime in general, and the answer is yes, if they know they're protected and if they understand that they need to be protected. That's probably something particular about this area: many victims don't realize they're victims. There is a bit of time or work that needs to be done with this. But when they know they're insulated from those who are mistreating them, there could be more willingness to cooperate. We've seen that in many areas of criminality in which we're dealing with victims or witnesses, or individuals.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: You're saying there's a correlation between, at a minimum, knowing that the predator is in jail and victims speaking out—there's a correlation between those two facts.

• (1240)

Supt Michel Aubin: I can tell you—and this is basically premised on police experience and dealing with people at the time we're interviewing them—there is a correlation between their knowing that the perpetrator or person against whom they are talking is in the judicial system, in jail, or out of reach and basically out of harm's way, and a better intention on their part to work or cooperate with law enforcement, from a general perspective.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: I have another quick question.

Are there any statistics—

The Chair: That's it. You just have 40 seconds left.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: Okay.

Are there any statistics on the age of most victims, or on any other things? Are there any statistics right now on the victims of human trafficking?

Sgt Marie-Claude Arsenault: No, we don't have statistics. I can give you some statistics on the cases before the courts where we've had convictions. In the five cases where a human trafficking conviction was secured, four of the victims were underage.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: They were minors.

Sgt Marie-Claude Arsenault: They were minors, under age 18.

Supt Michel Aubin: There were seven adults, though.

Sgt Marie-Claude Arsenault: Yes, seven adults, and four underage.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: Okay, great. Thanks you very much.

The Chair: Before I thank the witnesses and ask them to leave, I would just like to clarify a couple of things. I'll just put the questions to you and you can answer them quickly.

In your awareness package, are you also working with the hospitality industry, with taxi drivers, and other people who deal with transportation, who may quite often be in a better place to see what you cannot see? For instance, someone could be getting into a cab with someone who is obviously underage, or whatever. That's the first question.

The second question is about the Internet. I discovered when we were dealing with this, when I was Secretary of State for the Status of Women, that the Internet is where much of the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth occurs. It's no longer on the streets, because they're too easy to recognize and be picked up. So they're either on the Internet or they're in massage parlours, which, generally speaking, are quite legal-looking and -sounding. This is a hidden issue; it's not easy to find the perpetrators.

When we dealt with this and did some research on it out of Status of Women Canada, we found that a lot of the internationally trafficked people are very afraid to come out. It doesn't matter if the local person is in jail, because their families at home are at risk, so they won't speak out because they know the cartels and traffickers are ready to deal with their families at home, and they live under that threat.

So I'd like to know what you're doing about people in the hospitality industry and taxis, and about the Internet, and about the fact that a lot of people will not speak out because of fear of retribution back home.

Let's put it this way: if you get 44 people, we know they are not the tip of the iceberg; they are the atom at the top of the iceberg. So how do you plan to deal with this, not only at the 2010 Olympics, which is what we're talking about, but in general? I think this requires a bigger and a broader policy initiative that must be brought into play.

Supt Michel Aubin: To your first question, Madam Chair, on the hospitality industry and what not, I think there are two approaches. One is through the current awareness campaign to bring awareness to all. But as well, the other is to focus on law enforcement from a practical perspective. With law enforcement in the city, the police officers who are on the street have their contacts or sources in all sorts of industries. That's how law enforcement works. Regardless of what type of crime, we do have our contacts, and it's through those contacts and neighbourhood policing and reaching out to the community—

The Chair: What I mean is the person sitting at a hotel registration desk, and the taxi driver.

Supt Michel Aubin: And that's why I say that through law enforcement we have contacts within these services by the very nature of our work, because we deal with them on many issues. So it's very normal to have these contacts, and it's a matter of making the police officers aware of this type of crime, as well as the general community.

There's a lot of work that needs to be done; you're absolutely right. But we think the best way of getting at this is to make the police officers aware, because they are already in touch with the people who are running the hotels, especially the seedier hotels, where all sorts of criminality may occur.

• (1245)

Sgt Marie-Claude Arsenault: May I add something?

In the tool kits in front of you, there are two posters. There is one for targeting victims; the other one is for the public in general. These posters have been distributed, and the intention is to place them in various areas such as airports, bus stations, and train stations. They will be in every public place where a victim can see them.

The Chair: Will they be on the Internet?

Mr. Barry MacKillop: I would add a couple of things. One is on the broader prevention. The “blue blindfold” campaign that Crime Stoppers will do will be available everywhere and will be distributed everywhere.

They will also be doing a national media campaign as well. People see vignettes on TV about Crime Stoppers. They will develop one with respect to human trafficking, so that will be available.

The Chair: Will it be on airlines?

Mr. Barry MacKillop: I'm not sure. We can certainly talk. I haven't looked at whether Crime Stoppers will be moving into that area.

The Chair: Brazilian airlines had a great clip that they used to put on with regard to this.

Mr. Barry MacKillop: Yes, they did.

The Chair: Sorry, go ahead. I only have a minute, so I need the answer on the Internet.

Mr. Barry MacKillop: As you know, we do have our national strategy for protection against child sexual exploitation on the Internet. I chair that strategy as well. We also work very closely with Cybertip.ca. Some of the money that we received from budget 2006 was for renewing the child protection strategy. It includes their ability to receive tips related to child trafficking as well. If there are trafficking issues, they will receive tips and track them and refer them to law enforcement, as they do with the child sexual exploitation tips that they receive, so we are starting to cover some of the Internet from that perspective.

Madam Chair, I know it doesn't go to your question on recruitment on the Internet, but from the police and law enforcement perspective, I'll say without going into detail that there is enforcement on the Internet.

The Chair: What can you tell us about massage parlours?

Mr. Barry MacKillop: Massage parlours would be Michel's area.

The Chair: That's your legal entity.

Supt Michel Aubin: We're very focused. A lot of work is being done on massage parlours by the RCMP or other law enforcement agencies, and that's where we're educating the police officers. When they go in and realize that it's not massage and that what's going on is an illegal activity, they'll look at it from a perspective that's beyond the illegality and consider whether we're talking about victims of human trafficking. Right now, many times the RCMP is going in with Toronto police, Montreal police, or Vancouver police, and they're looking at it, so there is a lot of awareness going on. They've already started on the efforts in going down that road, but more work has to go into it. I have to be honest with you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Tilly, you have one and a half minutes.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Thank you for being here with us today. I really enjoyed your presentation and I appreciate all the work you're putting into this.

You've touched on my question in a way. After they're found guilty of this, you started to say they're not left out in the cold. What are some means of education or partnership that are put in place to help these people regain their self-esteem and change their lives around?

Supt Michel Aubin: Do you mean for the victims?

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon: Yes.

Sgt Marie-Claude Arsenault: Again, it's all a matter of partnerships and working with the communities and NGOs to help reintegrate the victims afterward. Is that what you're talking about? Is it after the offence?

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon: Yes.

Sgt Marie-Claude Arsenault: There are some law enforcement agencies that specifically work with some community groups to help the victims gain their self-esteem back and to work on problems they may have and so on. It's basically to work with our partners to make sure that they are dealt with.

Supt Michel Aubin: I'll give you an example. In British Columbia, a prime example was the Pickton farm case. We have victim management services within the RCMP. In this example we were dealing with the ladies who were involved in prostitution and who came and testified to the courts. A lot of help was provided to them through victim management services to help them regain their

confidence and self-esteem and find a way to carry themselves in life. A lot of support went in so that these people would gain that confidence and come before our courts and testify.

It's something that's recognized. Law enforcement has certain—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Aubin.

I'm sorry, Tilly, your time is up.

Thank you so very much. I must say I was very impressed. You had a very comprehensive and clear set of reports. You literally supplemented each other, and it was very good. Thank you for coming, and thank you for answering all those questions that were thrown at you.

Now I will suspend for two minutes. We must finish this little piece of business in camera, so we will suspend to go in camera. I will ask those people who do not belong in the room to leave, please.

Thanks very much.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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