



PEEL REGIONAL POLICE
7150 Mississauga Road
Mississauga, Ontario L5N 8M5
PeelPolice.ca 905-453-3311

A SAFER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

April 17, 2023

To: **Chair Karen Vecchio, MP**
Standing Committee on the Status of Women
Canada's House of Commons – 44th Parliament, 1st Session

Brief on Human Trafficking

Peel Regional Police (PRP) would like to start by commending the members of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women for the important work and focus that is being placed on **Human Trafficking of Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People**.

PRP is the third largest municipal police service in Canada and serves the communities of Mississauga and Brampton, as part of Peel Region in Ontario, which is inclusive of Caledon. Peel is one of the most diverse communities in the country with over 1.5 million residents and a major transportation hub that includes Pearson International Airport.

Human Trafficking continues to be a significant concern for PRP. The work towards eliminating it has been a priority for a number of years, through enforcement and working with community partners; and in 2020 it became a key part of our Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) Plan.

Approximately two-thirds of police-reported human trafficking cases in Canada occur in Ontario, and 62 per cent originate in the Greater Toronto Area with Peel being a major corridor for this activity. It primarily impacts girls and women, with the average age of victims being between 12 and 24 years old.

PRP has dedicated a number of resources to disrupt human trafficking and help victims. This includes a VICE Unit with 16 officers who are trained in human trafficking investigations, work in three shifts and who are available 24/7.

In January, PRP became the first service in Canada to announce all frontline and investigative officers would undergo specialized training to better identify and stop human traffickers; and most importantly, help victims. Peel Police is providing this training in partnership with Timea Nagy and her organization Timea's Cause. Timea is a survivor who was lured from Hungary to Canada and trafficked in Ontario 24 years ago. The training is survivor-led and builds capacity for officers to recognize the signs of trafficking.



PEEL REGIONAL POLICE
7150 Mississauga Road
Mississauga, Ontario L5N 8M5
PeelPolice.ca 905-453-3311

A SAFER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

*Appendix A contains a link to the announcement; Appendix B is a video that describes the training for police officers.

Despite Statistics Canada's *Trafficking in person in Canada*, which shows police-reported incidents of human trafficking remained stable in 2021, PRP has seen a significant increase in these incidents. The numbers of incidents in Peel have doubled in human trafficking charges laid in 2022 (when compared to 2018). In actuality, our stats are a very small representation of the issue. According to nCourage, Peel's anti-human trafficking services hub, approximately 75 per cent of survivors who they work with do not report it to police.

Peel Regional Police Human Trafficking Charges:

Year	Number of Charges Laid
2022	127
2021	114
2020	115
2019	120
2018	68

Working with Community Partners:

For many years, PRP has worked closely with community partners in the human trafficking space recognizing that survivors need coordinated services to support their housing, legal, counselling and other services in order to prevent a return to their traffickers.

In 2015, through provincial support, police and community partners came together to discuss how to better support victims and survivors of human trafficking. This led to the establishment of the Peel Human Trafficking Service Providers Committee (PHTSPC). The Committee now has over 40 members comprised of PRP, service providers and government agencies from within and outside of Peel Region. PHTSPC's mission is to collaborate for the elimination of trafficking through education, advocacy, empowerment and the restoration of victim/survivor rights.

In 2017, the Region of Peel developed a strategy to address human sex trafficking, which identified dedicated programs and housing for victims and



PEEL REGIONAL POLICE
7150 Mississauga Road
Mississauga, Ontario L5N 8M5
PeelPolice.ca 905-453-3311

A SAFER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

survivors. This led Regional Council to endorse the '[Strategy to Address Human Sex Trafficking in Peel Region](#)' in 2018. The strategy aligns with the Province of [Ontario's Anti-human Trafficking Strategy 2020-2025](#).

In 2020, the integrated Anti-Human Trafficking HUB (nCourage) was established through Catholic Family Services of Peel Dufferin, Our Place Peel and EFRY Hope and Help for Women, which was funded through the Region of Peel and Province of Ontario.

In an effort to ensure appropriate cultural and linguistic outreach and engagement, PHTSPC continues to work closely with Indus Community Services to inform and educate newcomers and especially international students of Hindu, Punjabi, Tamil, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati and Arabic descent on the prevalence of human trafficking, and how they can better protect against it.

Through PHTSPC and nCourage, we know that there can be better coordination of service delivery and government funding for the care of survivors of human trafficking.

One of the main gaps for victims and survivors is access to dedicated housing; the demand significantly outweighs the accessibility. Currently there is one safe house in Peel, (Bonnie McPhee) that accommodates up to six survivors for up to six months. This does not address the need for emergency beds for those who need immediate help, those not yet disengaged from their traffickers, or those not wanting to engage in more intensive supports or services. The Peel Transition House is a transitional house that accommodates up to six survivors for up to two years, however after two years there are no other housing supports for survivors. There is also a significant lack of housing for survivors who are 25 years or older, or for those who have children residing with them.

PRP strongly believes that more investments are needed in coordinated preventative and educational measures around human trafficking, especially at airports and other transportation hubs. An example for reference is Pearson International Airport adopted the "Not in My City" campaign, a collaboration between Greater Toronto Airport Authority and PRP. You can find human trafficking information posted across arrival and departure terminals. These types of campaigns create greater awareness for victims and the public to identify the possible signs of human trafficking and who they can turn to for help.

*Appendix C are the graphics from "Not in My City" Campaign.



PEEL REGIONAL POLICE
7150 Mississauga Road
Mississauga, Ontario L5N 8M5
PeelPolice.ca 905-453-3311

A SAFER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Recommendations:

In 2024, renew the Federal Government's National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking, with the following six recommendations:

- To assist law enforcement agencies in Canada, establish a national human trafficking database that provides access to information on offenders, victims and interactions. Currently, law enforcement agencies use different tracking systems with no standardization or data sharing mechanism between jurisdictions.
- Establish funding that goes beyond the three-year model to ensure stability in ongoing programs, which will generate greater outcomes.
- Invest in an anti-human trafficking housing strategy. This would require investments into emergency beds, safe houses, transitional housing and independent housing for survivors, in coordination with the provinces and regions.
 - This increases a survivor's well-being and recovery journey; decreases the likelihood of them returning to their traffickers for basic needs; and helps investigators and Crowns to ensure access to the survivor at a permanent address.
- Establish a National Criminal Injuries Compensation Board for victims of gender-based violence including human trafficking, intimate partner and family violence. The funds would be used to support on-going medical treatments, trauma counselling and substance use recovery.
- Further invest in awareness, education and prevention campaigns around human trafficking; including encouraging provincial adoption of human trafficking curriculum for school boards in conjunction with community organizations.
 - Example: Ontario has adopted a human trafficking curriculum through Memorandum 166 Keeping Students Safe: Policy Framework for School Board Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocols. It supports coordinated action by all community partners to prevent, identify and recognize sex trafficking and develop responses to facilitate early and appropriate intervention.



PEEL REGIONAL POLICE
7150 Mississauga Road
Mississauga, Ontario L5N 8M5
PeelPolice.ca 905-453-3311

A SAFER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

- Work with the provinces to better coordinate the national and provincial human trafficking strategies and funding programs to address existing gaps.

Conclusion:

We are all responsible to support the recovery of human trafficking victims and survivors. PRP will continue to do our part in combatting this issue to prevent against additional harm and victimization in the community.

PRP is grateful for the Committee's time and consideration of this brief on human trafficking. We are willing to provide any further details that you might require and happy to engage in any further discussions. Please feel free contact Deputy Chief Mark.Dapat@PeelPolice.ca and Constable Joy.Brown@PeelPolice.ca any time.



PEEL REGIONAL POLICE
7150 Mississauga Road
Mississauga, Ontario L5N 8M5
PeelPolice.ca 905-453-3311

A SAFER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Appendix:

Appendix A: Link to [PRP Announcement video on AHT Training for Police Officer](#)

Appendix B: [Link to Timea Cause AHT training video](#)

Appendix C: [Anti-Human Trafficking Campaign: Not in My City](#)