



## The Salvation Army

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Giving Hope Today

**April 28, 2023**

**To:** Standing Committee on the Status of Women  
Canada's House of Commons – 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> Session

**Re:** Brief Submission for Study on Human Trafficking of Women, Girls, and Gender Diverse People in Canada

**Submitted by:** The Salvation Army

Honourable Chairperson and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity for The Salvation Army to participate in the study of Human Trafficking of Women, Girls, and Gender Diverse People in Canada.

The Salvation Army has a long and extensive history of supporting, journeying with and working with individuals who have experienced sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. Through our established and well-respected survivor engagement, support and recovery services, we have seen and heard first-hand the trauma, abuse and violence that individuals experience in sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. These services are provided through Salvation Army institutions such as Illuminate, Winnipeg and London Correctional and Justice Services, and Sarah's Place.

Human trafficking continues to be a significant concern for The Salvation Army. Our work towards eliminating it has been a priority for a number of years through our national *Fight For Freedom Strategy* that focuses on education, awareness, training, prevention, collaboration, survivor support and recovery services. Because of our front-line work, The Salvation Army recommends that FEWO focus on the following areas:

### 1. Upholding Bill C-36 and Ending the Demand

*"True equality for women and girls will not be achieved until all forms of violence, including sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, are eradicated."* -**The Task Force on Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada, 2014**

Canada has repeatedly expressed its commitment to gender equality and social justice. Sex trafficking and the system of sexual exploitation are all primarily gendered based crimes that thrive in the systemic objectification and commodification of women and children's bodies for sexual services.

Sweden has one of the highest gender equality ratings. In 1999, Sweden was committed to advocating for gender equality by convincing "people to abstain from committing the crime of buying sex and to establish norms under which no woman, man, girl or boy can be sold and no one has the right to sexually exploit another human being". By promoting the Nordic Model (also called the Equality Model), the number of men purchasing sex dropped from 12.7 percent to 7.7 percent

between the introduction of Equality Model legislation in 1999 to 2008. By 2014, 72 percent of Swedes supported this law<sup>1</sup>.

Most Canadians are unaware that Bill C-36 is based in the Equality Model. There continues to be a need to fully implement Bill C-36 across the country through means of investing in national public awareness campaigns and educational programs at all levels, ongoing training of all law enforcement and the justice system, and a sustained focus and financial support of trauma informed prevention, protection and exiting services.

## **2. Sex Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation are a Result of Underlying Social Issues in Canada**

Sex trafficking and sexual exploitation are not issues that are isolated and singular. They are part of a continuum of intersecting oppressions such as poverty, homelessness, sexism, racism, the ongoing legacy of colonization, lack of access to work and education, food insecurity, dependency on chemical substances, intimate partner violence, child abuse and neglect, and pornography. Too many individuals accessing The Salvation Army's continuum of care and specialized support services have and continue to experience these social issues that sustain and entrap them in their situation of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation.

*“As a peer support worker and survivor, I continue to see the barriers women face when trying to exit. When a woman is referred to me, she needs housing, food, clothing, she needs to feel safe. I find her a women’s shelter, but she is only allowed to stay for one month. After that where does she go? How can she find her own housing when she has no money, no food, no work experience, no education? She returns to being exploited to survive. She continues living in the violence as she has no options, nowhere else to go, no way to eat, no place to heal.”*

**Jacklyn MacLean – Survivor Peer Support Worker – The Salvation Army London Correctional and Justice Services**

Those that have lived experience deserve to be seen, valued and guaranteed access to a dignified and protected human life as stipulated in Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

## **3. Colonial Structures and Systems That Increase the Vulnerabilities of Indigenous Women and Girls to Become and Remain Domestic Sex Trafficking Victims**

Canada has a historical and ongoing legacy of colonization that has contributed to Indigenous women and girls being intentionally formed into a population that has been and continues to be extremely susceptible to domestic sex trafficking. Colonization has created a racial hierarchy that has forced Indigenous women and girls into subservient positions of racial inferiority that has stripped them of their cultural teachings, heritage, traditional roles, value and identity. It has also created a sexist ideology that has objectified and commodified Indigenous women and girls, thus forming the perception that they are sexually violable and expendable. This racial hierarchy and

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<sup>1</sup> World Without Exploitation – *‘Equality Not Exploitation: An Overview of the Global Sex Trade and Trafficking Crisis, and the Case for the Equality Model’* (2019).


sexist ideology have been deeply ingrained into Canadian society as seen by a national apathy and resistance to acknowledge, address and resolve these colonial structures and patterns that have resulted in the continuation of Indigenous women and girls being overlooked and positioned as a population susceptible to domestic sex trafficking<sup>2</sup>. Under the leadership of Indigenous Peoples, these colonial structures, systems and response patterns need to be re-examined, dismantled and re-visioned.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Government of Canada fully and consistently implement Bill C-36 throughout every jurisdiction across Canada, ensuring there is proper enforcement.
2. Invest in and support housing (emergency, first and second stage) and support programming, economic empowerment, mental health and addictions support, access to education that addresses the root issues that drive, force and keep people in situations of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation.
3. Prioritize ongoing training of all law enforcement, the justice system, the public and educational programs at all levels. Training that is guided by lived experience recommendations.
4. Increased and sustained investment in trauma informed prevention, protection, support and exit services.
5. The call for Canada to fully implement recommendations 4.3, 5.3 and 12.14 of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
6. Under the leadership of Indigenous Peoples, survivor leaders and front-line service providers to work with federal officials to re-examine the colonial structures, systems and national anti-human response patterns to collaborate to create a new system that eliminates human trafficking in Canada.

The Salvation Army acknowledges and is thankful for the work of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women as they engage in the Study on Human Trafficking of Women, Girls, and Gender Diverse People in Canada. We welcome opportunity to be a part of further conversations about this study going forward.

Yours respectfully,



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<sup>2</sup> While the role and function of the government, its federal department and agencies, and law enforcement is a necessary and needed aspect of Canada's current national anti-trafficking approach, the heavy reliance on these federal sectors has limited its effectiveness and scope by minimizing the role, expertise, and voices of NGOs, faith-based groups, civil society actors, Indigenous Peoples and people with lived experience. As reported by front-line service providers, organizations, and agencies that deal directly with human trafficking victims, most cases are and will never be reported to the police because of mistrust of authorities, fear of deportation, language barriers, lack of mobility, fear, shame, lack of knowledge of host country's laws, and threats from the trafficker. Most human trafficking experiences are therefore falling outside the scope, boundaries and interaction with the government, its federal department and agencies, and law enforcement. The whole national anti-human trafficking approach and system needs to be re-evaluated and corrected.

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