



The Salvation Army

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Giving Hope Today

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To: United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commission

Re: Call for input to the report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls to the Human Rights Council on prostitution and violence against women and girls.

Submitted by: The Salvation Army – Canada and Bermuda Territory

Thank you for the opportunity for The Salvation Army to participate in the call for input on the report of the Special Rapporteur on prostitution and violence against women and girls.

The Salvation Army has a long and extensive history of supporting, journeying with and working with individuals who have experienced prostitution, 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 prostitution, sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. These services are provided through Salvation Army institutions such as:

Illuminate - operating six direct services and initiatives in Canada for survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking, they boldly disrupt the cycles of human trafficking by illuminating public awareness through education, relentless intervention strategies, safe places for survivors to heal, and establishing networks that build back extraordinary lives for those affected in Canada.

Winnipeg and Surrounding Area Correctional and Justice Services - operates the *Women Seeking Alternatives Program*. This is a community-based alternative measures program that supports women and transgendered individuals who have or are being sexually exploited through prostitution by offering them an alternative to the court process that avoids the punitive aspects of a criminal record, jail terms, probation, and/or fines. This program includes education, therapeutic, and recreational components connecting participants to community supports.

London Correctional and Justice Services - operates seven direct MSHT services and initiatives in Canada for both victims and survivors of MSHT. Led and informed by survivors, they provide safe and innovating spaces for victims and survivors to be heard and supported as they journey towards their well-being, effective intervention and advocacy strategies, and intentional engagement to reduce the demand.

Sarah's Place - provides long-term transitional housing alongside assistance services for women who have experienced human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and chemical/substance dependency. Using a trauma informed and person-centered approach, participants are encouraged and supported as they grow individually and collectively while living in a safe, stable and nurturing community. Assistance is provided through one-to-one meetings, group workshops and meetings, community connections, referrals, accompaniment, and collaborations/case management between caseworkers and participants.

William and Catherine Booth
Founders

Lyndon Buckingham
General

Lee Graves
Territorial Commander

Saskatoon, Winnipeg, and London Sex Buyer Accountability Program - is a community-based alternative measures program offered to those who have been arrested as consumers/purchasers of sex. This full day program seeks to educate sex buyers on the realities of prostitution and human trafficking. The goal of this program is to provide accountability and education while addressing the demand for paid sex as a path to abolition of the sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of women and children.

Prostitution, sex trafficking and sexual exploitation continues to be a significant concern for The Salvation Army. Our work towards eliminating them has been a priority for several years through our national *Fight for Freedom Strategy* that focuses on education, awareness, training, prevention, collaboration, survivor support and recovery services.

The following information is based on collaborative input from our front-line workers, lived experience, leaders and victims and survivors accessing our services and support from the above-mentioned service providers and locations, excluding Illuminate.

Two forms of hidden prostitution have been identified by individuals with lived experience accessing our services. They include:

- The demand for sex in exchange for a place to sleep either for a few nights or longer term due to precarious housing, experiencing homelessness or couch surfing.
- The demand for sex in exchange for drugs as the woman is living with an addiction.

We have seen two major categories of women and girls who are affected by prostitution in Canada.

1. Women and Girls Who are Experiencing Underlying Social Issues in Canada

Prostitution is not an issue that is isolated and singular. It is 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 women and girls in their situation of prostitution.

“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.”

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

2. Indigenous Women and Girls Who are Affected by Colonial Structures and Systems That Increase their Vulnerabilities to Prostitution and Domestic Sex Trafficking

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 prostitution and domestic sex trafficking. As

a result of colonial actions such as dispossession, containment on reserves, residential schools, cultural genocide, and the Indian Act, the lives of Indigenous females have been brutally and severely devalued and diminished.

Colonization has created a racial hierarchy that has forced Indigenous women and girls into subservient positions of racial inferiority that has aided in stripping them of their cultural teachings, heritage, traditional roles, value, and identity. It 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 initial act of colonization has morphed and continues as a destructive legacy that has been linked to present-day social realities of Indigenous female poverty, vulnerability to sexual and physical violence, dysfunctional and/or violent families and institutions, being under-educated, under-employed, and unemployed, struggling with addictions, homelessness, inadequate, and unstable housing, and high rates of mental and physical health issues.

Colonization has created too many structures and practices that have contributed to Indigenous women and girls currently being in increased danger of prostitution and sex exploitation resulting in a long-term societal pattern and heritage based upon their oppression, increased vulnerability, perceived disposability, and forced invisibility. Today, Indigenous women and girls currently make up over 50% of the estimated victims of domestic human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation despite making up only 4% of Canada's total population¹.

The racial hierarchy and sexist ideology that was created by colonization, has 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 prostitution and sex exploitation². Under the leadership of Indigenous Peoples, these colonial structures, systems, and response patterns need to be re-examined, dismantled and re-visioned.

Based upon feedback from women and girls experiencing prostitution and sexual exploitation accessing our support and services, they are treated as if they are not human. They are regarded as being commodities to be purchased, used, and violated with little consent involved. Once money or non-financial remuneration is given, the sex buyer has all the power. The option to say no is limited as the sex consumer holds the power and belief that they should receive whatever they want because of that payment. This continues to promote the message that men are owed access to women's bodies as facilitated through prostitution. The entitlement to a woman's body and the prioritization of a man's "needs" are achieved at the expense of their inherent worth, equality, and value. 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.

For those who solicit women in prostitution, we have found the following through our Sex Buyers Accountability Programs (SBAP):

Winnipeg:

- Between 2011 to 2023, 699 individuals have been charged with purchasing sex.

¹ Sethi, A. (2019) 'Domestic Sex Trafficking of Aboriginal Girls in Canada: Issues and Implications', *First Peoples Child and Family Review: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 14(1), p. 226-242.
Sikka, A. (2010) "Trafficking of Aboriginal Women and Girls in Canada", *Aboriginal Policy Research Consortium International*, 57, p. 201-231.

- Between 2019 to 2023, nine were re-arrested for the same charge.
- Of the 278 individuals arrested and referred to our SBAP between 2019 to 2023, all were males or identified as males.
- The age demographic of the offending population between 2019 to 2023 was 87 years old being the oldest and the youngest being 19 years old. The mode offending ages was 34 years old.
- Individuals arrested on the street corners during stings were proportionately low income and newer to Canada (permanent residency or work permits).
- Individuals arrested during hotel strings had higher incomes, were living in more affluent parts of the city and largely Canadian citizens.
- Many disclosed during the interview stage of the SBAP that they had wanted to live out a fantasy they had seen in pornography of being with a person experiencing prostitution and trying out “fetishes” they did not feel comfortable trying with their partner.

London:

- Between 2010 to 2022, 374 men participated in the SBAP.
- Of the 361 individuals arrested and referred to our SBAP between 2019 to 2023, all were males or identified as males.
- Participants came from a wide range of socio-economic and educational backgrounds such as university students, lawyers, police officers, and university professors.
- Many participants disclosed:
 - They were unaware that buying sex was illegal in Canada.
 - They thought buying sex was legal in Canada because of the numerous ads on the internet.
 - They were not sure if buying sex was legal in Canada but thought it would be deemed a “very minor offence” and would likely only get a fine. Therefore, they did not give it much thought.
- Many participants shared that they regularly viewed pornography before they took the “next step” of searching for ads for paid sex.
- Many women and girls disclosed that they had experienced physical and sexual violence due to men wanting to replicate violent, degrading acts that they have seen in pornography and were taken somewhere remote to be physically abused and tortured.

Saskatoon:

- Between 2002 to 2019, we have hosted around 104 SBAPs sessions.
- Between 2002 to 2019, 284 people have successfully completed this program.
- Of the individuals arrested and referred to our SBAP, all were males or identified as males.
- The age demographic of the offending population was 74 years old being the oldest and the youngest being 18 years old.
- Many of the same socio-economic and educational backgrounds described for Winnipeg and London also apply to Saskatoon.
- No SBAP has taken place between 2019 to 2023 due to COVID-19 restrictions and more recently, local law enforcement not conducting any targeted intervention due to lack of attention in this area.

From our SBAPs, we continue to see how prostitution is driven by men fueling the demand and intersecting with the use of pornography that ultimately results in violence, and trauma.

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/job empowerment, mental health and addictions support, access to education that addresses the root issues that drive, force, and keep people in situations of prostitution and sexual exploitation.
3. Prioritize ongoing training of all law enforcement, the justice and medical systems, the public and educational institutions at all levels, of the effects of prostitution, sexual exploitation and pornography on individuals, others, and self. This training should be guided by lived experience recommendations.
4. Increased and sustained investment in trauma informed prevention, protection, support and exit services.
5. Dismantle toxic perspectives of masculinity and pornography through intentional education, prevention and protection work with men and boys throughout Canada.
6. Fund, support, and increase Sex Buyer Accountability Programs throughout Canada in collaboration with law enforcement and the justice system.
7. Provide clarity around legal definitions pertaining to prostitution, sex trafficking and the sexual exploitation (and associated terms) in the legal code to support law enforcement in increasing targeted interventions resulting in additional Sex Buyers Accountability Programs.
8. Educate and bring awareness around technical and legal issues around AI in support of law enforcement.
9. 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.
10. 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 prostitution and sexual exploitation in Canada.

The Salvation Army acknowledges and is thankful for the work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls for the United Nations. We welcome opportunity to be part of further conversations about this study going forward.

Yours Respectfully,



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