

Human Trafficking FAQs

What is human trafficking?

Human Trafficking involves the **recruitment, transportation or harboring** of persons for the purpose of **exploitation** (typically in the sex industry or for forced labor). Traffickers use various methods to maintain control over their victims, including force, sexual assault, threats of violence and physical or emotional abuse.

Transportation may also be considered one of these methods as it is used to isolate the trafficked person by putting them in an unfamiliar environment. This transportation **does not have to be across borders**, movement can be from one side of the city to the other. Research has even shown that domestic trafficking (within borders) is more common in Canada than international trafficking (across borders).

Human trafficking can take many forms. These include **sex trafficking** (exploitation in the sex industry); **labour trafficking** (exploitation through forced labour); and **organ trafficking** (the trade of human organs for the purpose of transplantation).

What is the difference between human trafficking and smuggling?

Human trafficking and human smuggling are **not** the same thing. **Domestic human trafficking** refers to any victim of human trafficking who is trafficked within Canada (regardless of the victim's citizenship status). **International human trafficking** refers to any victim of human trafficking who, in the process of being trafficked, crossed an international border (regardless of the victim's status).

Human smuggling is a form of **illegal migration** involving the organized transport of a person **across an international border**, usually in exchange for a sum of money and sometimes in dangerous conditions. When the final destination is reached the business relationship ends, and the smuggler and the individual part ways. In some cases, a person who has agreed to be smuggled into a country becomes a trafficking victim at the hands of the smuggler.

What is the scope of human trafficking in Canada compared to internationally?

Canada has been identified as a transit and destination country for human trafficking. The extent of human trafficking is difficult to assess due to the clandestine nature of these offences, the reluctance of victims/witnesses to come forward to law enforcement and the difficulty in distinguishing between human trafficking victims and illegal migrants. **Canada is also a country where domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation prevails** and 90% trafficking cases are domestic (within borders).

Who are the victims of human trafficking?

In Canada, vulnerable populations at risk of becoming trafficked include migrant workers, new immigrants, youth, Aboriginal women and girls, those who are socially or economically disadvantaged, or those who may have been lured to urban centers or have gone of their own free will with the hopes of bettering their lives. Convictions for human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation demonstrate that Canadian girls and women are often victims. At least 80% of trafficked persons exploited in the sex trade are Aboriginal and the average age of entry is 13.

Who are the traffickers?

Often people are trafficked by organized crime groups such as gangs and by the people closest to them, such as boyfriends, husbands, parents and other family. Some victims of trafficking were first exploited by as children by family members. Individuals working independently also traffic persons for profit/personal gain.

The involvement of transnational organized crime groups in human trafficking is part of a growing global trend. Human trafficking generates huge profits for criminal organizations, which often have operations extending from the source to the destination countries. These transnational crime networks also utilize smaller, decentralized criminal groups that may specialize in recruiting, transporting or harboring victims.

How are victims recruited and controlled?

Traffickers approach potential victims in a variety of manners including through direct contact with the person; family and relatives; scouts who represent themselves as a sponsor, love interest, friend or peer; misleading advertisements promising jobs and opportunity; or on the internet. More abusive methods are also used and range from coerced compliance, extortion, kidnapping, servitude, violence, and physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

In international cases, victims may be transported by plane, boat, train or any type of vehicle, and often a combination of them, using genuine and/or fraudulent documents that are usually removed from them upon arrival at their destination. Victims may be isolated and/or taken to illicit businesses where they may be subjected to physical and sexual abuse and concealment.

How would you identify a trafficked person?

There are very few definitive clues for identifying a trafficked person, but often includes a combination of a variety of indicators.

- they may be controlled or intimidated by someone else (i.e. being escorted or watched)
- they may not speak on their own behalf and may not be English/French speaking
- they may not have a passport or other I.D.
- they may not be familiar with the neighborhood they live/work in
- they may be moved frequently by their traffickers
- they may have injuries/bruises from beatings and/or weapons
- they may show visible signs of torture i.e. cigarette burns, cuts

- they may show visible signs of branding or scarring (indicating ownership by the trafficker)
- they may show signs of malnourishment
- they may express fear and intimidation through facial expressions and/or body language

Where would you find someone who is being trafficked in the sex industry?

Victims may be found anywhere in Canada. Some basic examples include:

- nightclubs/bars
- modeling studios
- hospitals
- pornography
- escort services
- massage parlors
- shelters
- private residences
- on the internet
- hotels
- on the streets

Where would I find someone who is being trafficked for forced labour?

Victims can be found anywhere in Canada. Some basic examples include:

- non-unionized industries
- restaurants
- commercial agriculture sites
- construction sites
- domestic servitude