



June 10,2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0A2

The Honourable Dominic Leblanc, M.P.
Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs
328 Main Street
Suite I
Shediac, New Brunswick E4P 2E3

The Honorable Marc Miller, M.P.
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
3175 Saint-Jacques Street
Montréal, Quebec H4C 1G7

Canadian Department for Employment and Social Development Canada (EDSC)
142 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Quebec J8X 2K3

Canada. Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE)
22 Eddy St, 10th Flr
Gatineau, Quebec J8X 2V6

Re: Canada's National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking (2019-2024)

Dear Prime Minister, dear Minister of Public Safety,

Cc: Dear Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Dear Minister of Immigration, dear Minister of Employment and Workforce Development, dear Associate Deputy Minister of Employment and Social Development

Background

The *Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Network* (TCHTN) is a collaborative coalition of governmental and non-governmental organizations, agencies, and individuals with the mandate of providing a comprehensive response to human trafficking in the Toronto area. These partners are committed to working towards the eradication of human trafficking, while facilitating services and protection to trafficked persons through a holistic approach rooted in human rights and the unique needs of each individual.

As a diverse and growing network of over 30 organizations, our members offer various supports and services to victims and survivors of human trafficking/exploitation, as well as upstream prevention programs, advocacy, research, education, and more. Through their work, our members address different forms of human trafficking including, but not limited to, domestic and international sex trafficking, labour trafficking, and forced marriage.

Many of our Network's members participated in Public Safety Canada's regional and national human trafficking consultations in 2018 before the National Strategy was launched, and we are now gathering information on the status and future of the Strategy as it completes its final year. We understand that there will be an evaluation of the Strategy published in the Summer of 2024, which we look forward to analyzing when it becomes available. We are eager to understand if/how the different deliverables of the Strategy were implemented, and what future opportunities for funding exist for community organizations, including those not currently funded by Public Safety Canada.

Ongoing Consultations

Regarding the renewal of the National Strategy and future plans, we stress the importance of ongoing consultations with service providers, grassroots organizations, Indigenous groups, advocates, survivors, children and youth, and other community stakeholders such as those in the *Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Network*, and that these consultations take an intersectional and holistic approach. We also highlight the value of consulting with organizations who were *not* funded by Public Safety Canada, despite implementing much of the work outlined in the Strategy.

In addition to ongoing consultations with community organizations, it is crucial to implement, maintain, and fund a Survivor Advisory Table with members representing all forms of human trafficking, as each form is unique. Survivors must be meaningfully engaged and consulted on an ongoing basis, at every stage of the work. Consultations must always take into account each survivor's need for safety and privacy and should be approached with a trauma and violence informed lens. Survivor input and recommendations are invaluable, and must be treated with the same regard and respect as other experts in the anti-trafficking space. They are, in fact, the real experts. In this light, we also believe that survivors should be compensated fairly for their time and expertise in their role as advisors. Indeed, survivors must be treated as equal partners in all aspects of this work.

Employing Existing Work and Studies

Moving forward, it is also crucial for the government to consider the many studies and reports that have already been published, such as the *Standing Committee on the Status of Women's 2023 study of the Human Trafficking of Women, Girls, and Gender Diverse People*, the *UN Special*

Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery's report on his 2023 study of Canada (which members of our Network helped organize and participated in), the *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, and others. Considering the many recommendations that already exist will ensure that Public Safety Canada is respecting previous efforts of community organizations, survivors and Indigenous communities, and that processes avoid duplicating work and remain as efficient as possible.

Mitigating Risks

We believe that Canada must renew its commitment to combating human trafficking and implement an ongoing whole-of-government National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking given the prevalence of trafficking in not just the city centres, but across the country. This is especially critical when it comes to preventative strategies to mitigate risks of labour and sexual exploitation resulting from Canada's upcoming financial commitments, such as the 2026 FIFA World Cup taking place in Toronto and Vancouver. We also believe that any policy reforms that are central to mitigating the risk of exploitation, such as on the overhaul of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, should be part of the larger consultation with the anti-human trafficking sector across the country and should be informed by lived experience.

We firmly believe that with a collaborative approach that values community and grassroots input, and by working more closely together, we can make significant strides in eradicating human trafficking and strengthening our communities while building a more just and equitable society.

We look forward to continuing this conversation with Public Safety Canada and other government stakeholders in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Aura Freedom International
Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
Carolyn Luscombe-Coordinator- Victim Services- Metis Nation of Ontario
FCJ Refugee Centre
Mary Ward Centre
OneChild
The I Do! Project