

## **Input for 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 Cathy Peters, beamazingcampaign.org** The Be Amazing Campaign is an Anti-Human Trafficking Initiative in Canada, presented by former inner city high school teacher and educator Cathy Peters. Cathy has made approximately 700 presentations since 2014, and has presented at Global Summits, to Indigenous groups (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls gatherings) at the first RCMP Human Trafficking webinar for law enforcement across Canada and received a Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal for her anti-human trafficking advocacy work in Canada.

- 1. Provide examples of the hidden forms of prostitution, and explain to what extent they are recognized and dealt with as such?** I am a former inner city high school teacher raising awareness about human sex trafficking, sexual exploitation and child sex trafficking to politicians, police and the public in British Columbia, Canada. British Columbia has the least amount of public awareness about this crime in Canada, hence my advocacy work. Prostitution would not exist without trafficking. Prostitution would not exist without buyers. The hidden forms of prostitution are typically with underage girls and some boys. It begins primarily online due to unregulated technology where the luring takes place.
- 2. Describe the profile of women and girls affected by prostitution in your country, and provide disaggregated data, where possible.** The profile of women and girls are underage and vulnerable. In British Columbia and Canada, Indigenous girls are most severely overrepresented in prostitution and targeted aggressively for the commercial sex industry. The disabled, LGBTQ, run-aways, youth in foster care, at-risk youth with multiple ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences- see Dr. Nadine Burke pediatrician in San Francisco) are also aggressively targeted.
- 3. Describe the profile of those who solicit women in prostitution and whether such relations are regulated, and provide supporting data, where possible.** The sex buyers are typically married men, over 50 years of age, married with children, with university degrees, making over \$100,000 per year. (Source: Dr. Melissa Farley from Prostitution Research Education, San Francisco). A new trend: due to the "normalization" of pornography viewing, young men ages 18-25 are purchasing sex. (Source: Dr. Gail Dines, Culture Reframed). In Canada, prostitution is illegal (asymmetrical criminalization- the sex buyer is criminalized, the sex seller is recognized as a victim and immune from prosecution), so such relations are not regulated, but the current PCEPA (Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act) law is also not consistently enforced.
- 4. What forms of violence are prostituted women and girls subjected to (physical, psychological, sexual, economic, administrative, or other)?** From the hundreds of survivors who have spoken to me, they are: slapped, bitten, spat on, verbally abused, beaten, sat on until they cannot breathe, forcibly impregnated, raped, gangraped, raped with a weapon, anally raped, nearly drowned in a tub or toilet, choked, suffocated, porn photos taken, porn/snuff films made, forced to watch others harmed, threatened to be killed, and the list goes on and on. Every form of abuse is experienced by these women and girls (some boys) as part of their complete dehumanization. These individuals are not seen as being human by their perpetrators. When sexual violence is ongoing, there is a deep level of complex trauma that develops called complex PTSD. Complex PTSD trauma symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, being easily frightened, development of avoiding behaviours, hyper vigilance, inability to trust anyone and the inability to feel love or happiness. There are predominately negative thoughts and there is often a developing preoccupation with suicide. There is hyper arousal, a tendency to be very nervous, ongoing sleep disorders and accompanying high-risk behaviour. There is an inability to regulate

emotions so depression, disorders of personality, eating disorders, cutting and self-destructive acts can occur. Addictions are common, resulting from self-medicating the pain. Victims blame themselves and lose the ability to see what a healthy relationship looks like. Trauma bonding to the perpetrator occurs. The level of trauma is extreme.

5. **Who is responsible for the perpetration of violence against women and girls in prostitution?** The sex buyers are responsible for the perpetration of violence against women and girls. They create the DEMAND. Prostitution would not exist without buyers. (Source: Valiant Richey is the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.)
6. **Describe the linkages, if any, between prostitution and the violation of the human rights of women and girls.** The linkage between prostitution and the violation of the human rights of women and girls is clear. Prostitution everywhere in the world is unequal, unhealthy, unsafe, and unfair to women and girls. Prostitution does not make women more equal or advance the quality of women and girls- it is a step backwards. (Source: Dr. Janine Benedet, UBC Law Professor on Prostitution Law). Prostitution destroys people. There is no “good or ethical” prostitution because all prostitution is violence. (Sources: Survivor testimonies at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament Canada. Consideration of Bill C-36, an Act to amend the Criminal Code. July 2014. Ourcommons.ca. Testimonies of Natasha Falle, Casandra Diamond, Katarina McLeod, Linda and Ed Smith, Glendene Grant, Bridget Perrier, Marina Giacomini, Larissa Crack, Trisha Baptie, Timea Nagy. Also, Brian McConaghy’s compelling testimony as a former RCMP forensics expert to the standing Committee of the Justice and Human Rights hearings of Canada on the introduction of a new law in Canada, PCEPA, July 10, 2014. Evidence-JUST (41-2) No. 43).
7. **What links are there between pornography and/or other forms of sexual exploitation and prostitution?** Pornography is the fuel for prostitution, human trafficking, domestic violence, and harm towards women and girls. Pornography is filmed prostitution and a predatory industry. This occurs because the porn industry is massive, lucrative, available in unlimited quantities and unchecked globally. Pornography is so omnipresent in today’s culture that it is a public health concern we cannot ignore. Pornography online is unregulated. Tobacco and alcohol are regulated but pornography is not regulated. Pornography is the public health crisis of the digital age. Pornography, prostitution, and trafficking are all inter-related. The availability of pornography exploded with the advent of the internet so that it is: accessible, anonymous, affordable, acceptable, aggressive, addictive. Class action suits against porn producers are just beginning in the USA. (Sources: Experts on pornography testifying at the Canadian Federal Health Committee in 2017: Dr. Sharon Cooper MD and CEO of Developmental and Forensic Pediatrics, Ms. Cordelia Anderson founder of Sensibilities Prevention Services and Dr. Mary Ann Layden psychotherapist and Director of Education at the Center for Cognitive Therapy at the University of Pennsylvania. Other global experts: Dr. Gary Wilson, Dr. John Foubert, SANE nurse Heidi Olson, Dr. Jocelyn Monsma Selby, Dr. Gail Dines).
8. **How is the issue of consent dealt with? Is it possible to speak about meaningful consent for prostituted women and girls?** Meaningful consent is questionable because prostitution usually involves marginalized, vulnerable, disadvantaged women and girls. For these individuals it is a “choiceless choice”, an absence of any choice. Consent is a misleading term. In prostitution mutuality between intimate partners does not exist, because money is exchanged, and violence is the outcome.
9. **How effective have legislative frameworks and policies been in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in prostitution?** Legislative frameworks and policies in Sweden, Norway, Iceland, and France, where the Nordic Model or Equality Model is understood and applied, are working (in contrast to Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Nevada

where prostitution is either fully decriminalized or legalized). In Canada, the Federal Law called PCEPA “Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act” was passed but with a change in government has not been consistently enforced and a national roll out campaign is missing. As a result, there is little public awareness about the crime and little political will to address it. One exception in Canada, currently, is in the Province of Alberta where the current Premier Danielle Smith has set up a task force to address human trafficking for the purpose of prostitution. Paul Brandt, the founder of “Not in My City” NGO has been instrumental in promoting policy and legislation.

10. **What measures are in place to collect and analyse data at the national level with a view to better understanding the impact that prostitution has on the rights of women and girls?** Collecting data is a problem in Canada and cited as one of the weaknesses by the TIP (Trafficking in Persons) report from the USA State department. The new Canadian Center to End Human Trafficking is collecting some data which is separate from police reports. In contrast, Shared Hope International in the USA successfully collects data state by state and is therefore highly effective in exposing the problem and what needs to be done to correct it. As a result, State legislatures are motivated to address the crime of sexual exploitation with new policy and legislation.
11. **What measures are in place to assist and support women and girls who wish to leave prostitution?** Exiting strategies and opportunities in Canada are minimal at best and not funded or promoted. Covenant House is globally recognized to assist trafficked youth. The Salvation Army has excellent full wrap-around exiting programs. However, with harm reduction strategies in most jurisdictions in Canada they do not offer exiting off-ramps from prostitution. This is a particular problem for the most vulnerable and the Indigenous women and girls. They have no options.
12. **What are the obstacles faced by organizations and frontline service providers in their mission to support victims and survivors of prostitution?** The main obstacle is lack of funding and lack of public awareness that the problem exists. In British Columbia for example, prostitution is called “sex work” in order to legitimize the industry. As a result, the public think women and girls choose to be prostituted and want to do it. There is no consideration that these women would choose an alternative way to live if given the opportunity.
13. **What are some of the lessons learned about what works and what does not when it comes to stemming any negative human rights consequences from the prostitution of women and girls?** The main lesson learned in my 45 years of learning and listening (summarized in my recent book “Child Sex Trafficking in Canada and How to Stop It”) is that men and boys must be taught to not exploit women and girls. Prevention education is desperately needed for men and boys. To create systemic change in society there needs to be awareness, prevention education, active collaboration, intervention, and a reduction of demand for paid sex.
14. **Are frontline organizations and survivors' organisations sufficiently included in policymaking at the national and international level?** In Canada there is currently minimal policymaking on this issue. Our current federal government has not made this issue a priority. Rather the sex industry is pressuring the government to fully decriminalize prostitution as seen by ongoing court challenges (for example September 2023-sex workers’ Charter challenge in Ontario with Justice Robert Goldstein’s decision). My advocacy work seeks to counter that pressure so that human rights and gender equality remain the hallmark of Canadian society.
15. **What recommendations do you have to prevent and end violence associated with the prostitution for women and girls?** Men and boys are the buyers of sex and are the KEY to end exploitation because they are the perpetrators. They need to be taught that girls have value and worth and that every woman and girl has the right to be free of violence. For example, BRAVE education out of Alberta (Dr. Kelly Schuler) has developed curriculum to reach and

educate boys to not exploit. Enforcement of the “Equality Model of Law” and massive Public Awareness Education is needed. With cooperation, collaboration, communication, and coordination we can make the world a better place so that women and girls can reach their highest potential and be the best version of themselves.

Sincerely, Cathy Peters

[beamazingcampaign.org](http://beamazingcampaign.org)

BC anti human trafficking educator, speaker, advocate

Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Medal for my anti human trafficking advocacy work

**Author: Child Sex Trafficking in Canada and How to Stop It ISBN 9781777892722**