

End Modern-Day Slavery

Human trafficking is happening right in your community. What will you do to stop it?

Media Kit

Campaign to End Modern-Day Slavery

Book Tour for Benjamin Perrin's *Invisible Chains: Canada's Underground World of Human Trafficking*

October 12 to 27, 2010

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About the End Modern-Day Slavery Campaign

Expert on human trafficking, Benjamin Perrin, is launching a national campaign to End Modern-Day Slavery at online press conference on October 12, 2010 at 10:00 EST.

The campaign will call for a national action plan to end human trafficking in Canada. It will also make recommendations to law enforcement, government and service providers in cities across the country.

Benjamin Perrin will draw his insights from his book, *Invisible Chains: Canada's Underground World of Human Trafficking*.

About Benjamin Perrin

Benjamin Perrin is an assistant professor at the University of British Columbia, Faculty of Law, a faculty fellow at the Liu Institute for Global Issues, and a leading expert on human trafficking. As a senior policy adviser and a witness before several Parliamentary committees, he has advised the federal government on this issue. He has also worked overseas with victims and assisted in the prosecution of child sex offenders as executive director of The Future Group, a non-governmental organization that he founded in 2000 to combat human trafficking. In 2009, Perrin was honoured by Hillary Clinton and the U.S. State Department as a “hero acting to end modern-day slavery” – the first Canadian to be recognized by this award.

About Invisible Chains: Canada's Underground World of Human Trafficking

Invisible Chains: Canada's Underground World of Human Trafficking is the first book ever published to expose the issue of human trafficking in Canada. The book is based on a three-year investigation into the problem and documents cases reported by police, provincial officials, immigration, and non-governmental organizations as well as accounts from victims and their families. It also evaluates Canada's response and makes specific recommendations to government, police and average Canadians. It is available on October 5, 2010 at www.amazon.ca.

Quick Facts about Human Trafficking

1) Overview

- Human trafficking is modern-day slavery, involving the sexual exploitation and forced labour of vulnerable people by criminals around the world
- Human trafficking is happening across Canada and its victims include men, women and children who are Canadians and newcomers alike
- Traffickers in Canada make almost \$280,000 per victim each year
- Facebook is a recruiting ground for sex traffickers luring teenage girls
- Craigslist has been used to sell victims as young as fourteen
- Human trafficking only became a Criminal Code offence in 2005
- Traffickers have “playbooks” to teach each other tactics to exploit victims
- Most provinces, notably Ontario, have no system in place to help victims
- Canada has no national action plan to combat human trafficking

2) What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking in Canada involves the sexual exploitation and forced labour of a diverse array of victims: Canadian citizens and newcomers, adults and children, women and men.

In 2000 a United Nations conference in Palermo, Italy, established a common definition of human trafficking in the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons. The *Palermo Protocol* has widespread international support, with 117 signatories, including Canada.

Under the Protocol, human trafficking occurs:

- when an individual recruits, transports, transfers, harbours or receives people;
- by means of deception, fraud, coercion, abuse of power, payment to others in control of the victim, threats of force, use of force or abduction;
- for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labour/services, removal of organs, servitude, slavery or practices similar to slavery.

3) Why is human trafficking called slavery?

Under international law, slavery is defined as “the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.” More simply, slavery exists when individuals are sold, traded, used, abused, and disposed.

Invisible Chains: Canada’s Underground World of Human Trafficking documents cases in Canada where girls and women are coerced, deceived or threatened into the sex trade. Many are bought and sold like cattle to ‘pimps’ or ‘boyfriends’ who lie, threaten and deceive them. The book also documents cases of international workers recruited to Canada, stripped of their passport and forced to work for virtually nothing either to pay for an inflated debt or out of fear. The experience of these victims clearly meets the definition of slavery.

4) How many people are victims of modern day slavery in Canada?

Exact numbers of victims are unknown because this is a highly lucrative and criminal business. Yet it clear that there are hundreds, potentially thousands, of victims exploited in Canada every year.

Some are children, women and men who had been victimized in a foreign country and are transported to Canada by their traffickers for greater profits.

Others are victims who were lured to the country with false promises of residency, work or big money. They are deceived, coerced or threatened to work in the sex industry or in other unpaid work.

Still others are individuals arrive knowing they will be engaged in prostitution but hope that the industry will profitable for them. Once in Canada they owe large debts to their trafficker and cannot leave their situation.

In 2004, the RCMP estimated that 800 foreign trafficking victims were exploited every year in Canada (600 in sexual exploitation and a further 200 in forced labour). The Criminal Intelligence Service of Canada confirmed that Canadian women and under-aged girls are victims as well, transported both within Canada and into the United States for sexual exploitation. Invisible Chains documents dozens of cases that confirm the systematic nature of human trafficking across Canada.

5) How many victims travel through Canada to the United States?

The United States is a significant destination for labour and sex trafficking. Between 14,500 and 17,500 victims are brought into that country. Recent increases in airport security have made land crossings into the U.S. from Canada and Mexico more attractive to traffickers.

While reliable estimates are not available, the most commonly cited estimate by the RCMP in 2004 suggests that between 1,500-2,200 people travel through Canada to the U.S. each year.

6) Are Canadians involved in sex trafficking internationally?

Canadian pedophiles and sexual predators travel overseas as “sex tourists” and are well represented. Their exploitation of children, men and women overseas fuels the demand for prostitution in that country and contributes to the exploitation of vulnerable people.

7) What is the government's response to-date?

Human trafficking is thriving in Canada due to a lack of a coordinated response from federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments. Canada must ensure that traffickers are prosecuted and victims are protected.

The federal government does not have a national action plan to end human trafficking in Canada. Some provinces have begun to develop their own strategies, but others – notably Ontario – have yet to act.

Belgium, Italy, the United States, and Sweden offer innovative examples of laws, policies, and programs that have succeeded in fighting human trafficking. Their strategies to protect victims, prosecute offenders, and prevent the crime are worth reviewing, evaluating, and considering for adaptation by Canada and other nations.

8) What can individuals do to fight human trafficking?

Martin Luther King Jr. said that a “collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist” is the first step toward positive change. After getting informed about the facts of human trafficking, you can take action:

1. **Tell someone**
Share what you've learned in *Invisible Chains* with a family member, friend, or colleague.
2. **Help the heroes**
Support organizations that help survivors by volunteering your time, language abilities, or professional skills. Donate money, clothes, or equipment to them, and perhaps plan a fundraising event to help an organization combating human trafficking. [Click here](#) for a list of organization combating human trafficking.
3. **Raise awareness**
Host an awareness event with your friends, work associates, church group, or service club to tell them about human trafficking and commit to doing something to address the problem.
4. **Call for change**
Email, call, or write a letter to your municipal, provincial, and federal politicians asking what they're doing to address the problem of human trafficking, and ask them to implement the recommendations for government shown above—they're supposed to be working for you, after all.
5. **Take a stand**
Become an advocate for at least one recommendation in *Invisible Chains* that you personally want to see adopted. The will to end exploitation must be marshalled for laws, policies, and programs to be reformed as part of the solution.
6. **Let your dollar talk**
Buy fair trade products where possible and, if you can't be sure, avoid products whose

makers are notorious for using forced labour. [Click here](#) for the global blacklist of forced labour trafficking products.

7. **Speak Up**

Raise the issue of human trafficking in letters to the editor, at political debates, in the classroom, and at town hall meetings.

8. **Be a woman against human trafficking**

Talk to your husband, boyfriend, partner, or male friends and family members about the realities of women and girls exploited in the sex industry.

9. **Be a man against human trafficking**

Don't pay for sex or go to places where commercial sex acts take place, either in Canada or when travelling abroad, and discourage your friends from doing so if you're invited to go along to such places. Explain your concerns.

10. **Report it**

Be aware of the warning signs of human trafficking in your community, at work, and when travelling. Report suspicious activity to your local police, or Crime Stoppers by calling 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

You can also report online child sexual abuse imagery, child sex tourism, child trafficking, and child luring to the Canadian Centre for Child Protection at www.cybertip.ca. Don't just stand idle when you suspect that someone may be a victim of exploitation. Call the police immediately. If you wait, it may be too late. We know that traffickers move victims frequently to avoid detection—help the police get one step ahead of the offenders.

Myths about Human Trafficking

The following is an excerpt from *Invisible Chains: Canada's Underground World of Human Trafficking*.

Myth: Trafficking involves crossing an international border with the victim or assisting in the victim's being transported across a border.

Reality: Trafficking is about victim exploitation and need not involve a border crossing.

Myth: Canadian citizens cannot be trafficked.

Reality: Victims include Canadians as well as foreign nationals.

Myth: Individuals know what they are getting into, so they cannot claim to have been trafficked.

Reality: Victims may have low self-esteem and be forced or deceived into compliance. Even when they have foreknowledge of the situation, they may lack the power or ability to leave and end their exploitation.

Myth: The individuals committed unlawful acts, so they are not trafficking victims.

Reality: Traffickers often force their victims to commit unlawful acts such as prostitution or immigration offences. Trafficked persons are victims of crime and should be treated with compassion, dignity, and respect.

Myth: The individual was paid for services.

Reality: Many trafficking victims never keep any of the money paid for their exploitation; traffickers may provide others with small amounts of money to keep them compliant but not enough to allow them to leave.

Myth: The individual had freedom of movement and so is not a trafficking victim.

Reality: Some traffickers forcibly confine their victims; many more control them using threats, psychological coercion, and manipulation. In many cases, traffickers are also able to make credible threats against the family members of the victim. Physical violence used against victims can easily convince them that these threats are serious.

Myth: Individuals who did not seize opportunities to escape are not trafficking victims.

Reality: Victims are often under threats that make escape impossible or are under control similar to that experienced by victims of domestic abuse.

Myth: The trafficker's actions were culturally appropriate. Who are we to question such practices?

Reality: Individual liberty is a right inherent to all people; countries across the globe consider human trafficking to be a serious problem that cannot be excused or justified.

Myth: Traffickers and recruiters are always men.

Reality: Women also recruit victims, enforce discipline for traffickers, and in some instances are traffickers themselves.

Myth: It can't be trafficking if the trafficker and victim are related or married.

Reality: This is like the old fable that it is legally impossible for a husband to rape his wife. Being married or related does not give someone the right to victimize another. Some victims have agreed to marry their exploiters in the false hope of lessening or ending their abuse.