

July 23, 2021

Senator Salma Ataullahjan
The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada, K1A0A4

Dear Senator Ataullahjan,

We are writing to you as the Sexual Exploitation in Canada Working Group, a body of The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC). Its purpose is to lead a shared church response to sexual exploitation, including pornography, as a justice and human rights issue that primarily affects women and children.

Thank you for your service to Canada as a Senator as well as your steadfast work in pushing forward **Bill S-228 – An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons)**. **You have our unwavering support.**

In 2005 Canada amended the Criminal Code by adding sections 279.01 to 279.04 to align with the definition of human trafficking articulated in the Palermo Agreement, which Canada signed in 2005. We are in favour of the first three sections (279.01 – 279.03) but agree with your proposed elimination of section 279.04 that regarding removing “threat of safety” from the definition of exploitation. Safety is an exceedingly difficult concept to prove in court and goes beyond the necessary requirements to prove exploitation, perhaps one reason why there are very few human trafficking convictions in Canada.

As the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking states in their report *The Introduction to Human Trafficking Corridors in Canada*, “In 2005, Canada introduced legislation prohibiting human trafficking, yet traffickers continue to reap large profits by exploiting people for their own gain across Canada. Between 2009-2018, police services across Canada reported 1,708 incidents of human trafficking; however, these numbers only represent situations of trafficking which received police intervention.” On May 6, 2021, statistics Canada released data showing that human trafficking had increased by 44% from 2018-2019. Many experts emphasize that the problem is even worse than the statistics indicate.

Human trafficking victims, mostly invisible, number over 40 million throughout the world. Canada must do its part through prosecutions to bring this multi-billion-dollar industry to an end and protect the lives of the most vulnerable. We, therefore, support your diligence and courage in raising the awareness of this inconsistency in our law through initiating and promoting Bill S-228.

Sincerely yours,



Diane Dwarka, Co-Chair
Sexual Exploitation Working Group



Deb Stanbury, Co-Chair
Sexual Exploitation Working Group

The CCC, founded in 1944, is a broad and inclusive ecumenical body, now representing 26 member churches including Anglican; Eastern and Roman Catholic; Evangelical; Free Church; Eastern and Oriental Orthodox; and Historic Protestant traditions. These member churches represent 13,500 worshipping communities and comprise 85% of the Christians in Canada.