

Claudette Bastien's Presentation at the Forum on Human Trafficking in Rome on July 5, 2018

Founded in 2004, CATHII, the Action Committee against Internal and International Human Trafficking (Comité d'action contre la traite humaine interne et internationale) is a non-governmental organization whose achievements include the publishing of a study on the needs of victims in Canada, another on cases of forced labour in Canada, and a directory of resources for trafficked persons. CATHII also set up the Quebec Coalition against Human Trafficking (Coalition québécoise contre la traite des personnes). The members of CATHII are religious Congregations and faith groups, most of whom are members of UNANIMA International, an NGO having consultative status with ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council).

In addition, two members are associated with the Franciscan family represented at the United Nations by Franciscans International. CATHII is a member of Talitha Kum, an international network against human trafficking; the Canadian Council for Refugees; CLES, the Committee for the Fight against Sexual Exploitation (Concertation des luttes contre l'exploitation sexuelle); and also the Migrant Workers Committee of the Defense Front for Non-unionized Workers (Front de défense pour les non-syndiqués). CATHII has presented briefs and taken part in consultations at the provincial, national, and international levels.

Every year the Formula 1 Grand Prix car race takes place in Canada. Because the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) are aware of the increase in the trafficking of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation at that time, border surveillance is tightened.

Since a new law came into force on December 6, 2014, the sale of sexual services is no longer a criminal offence in Canada. However, according to the RCMP, there is a clear correlation between an increased supply of sexual services and human trafficking, whether international or national.

The Council of Montrealers has recently been commissioned by the City of Montreal to document, for three years, the existence and extent of the phenomenon of trafficking of women and girls during the Formula 1 Grand Prix.

CATHII is working with other organizations to raise public awareness during the Formula 1 Grand Prix festivities in order to denounce the culture of sexual exploitation and to raise public awareness of the commoditization of prostitution. The government is being asked to better fund organizations that support women who want to get out of prostitution.

However prostitution in Montreal is an everyday occurrence, with 400 known houses of prostitution in Montreal.

You have heard that Canada hosted the G7 summit and, on this occasion, CATHII asked its member religious communities to send letters to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. 1434 signatures

were collected by CATHII members as part of the campaign that noted that climate change is making women more vulnerable to human trafficking. Letters were also sent in certified copies to the leaders of the main opposition political parties.

On September 1, 2016, in Canada, **a national inquiry into the 1200 missing or murdered Aboriginal women and girls** was launched. This national inquiry, led by an independent commission, is mandated to investigate and report on systemic causes of all forms of violence, including sexual violence, against Indigenous women and girls; and the underlying social, economic, cultural, institutional and historical causes. It is noted that rates of reported violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault, are 3.5 times higher than those for non-Aboriginal women. The Commission must offer recommendations for concrete and effective measures to eradicate the systemic causes of violence, to enhance the safety of Aboriginal women and girls, and to find ways to honor and commemorate the lives of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada.

Last October, in order to raise awareness of the reality of Aboriginal peoples, CATHII invited an Aboriginal woman to come and give us a conference. She emphasized the suffering of Aboriginal people as children were torn away from their parents to be placed in boarding schools with the intention of killing the Indian in them. As a consequence, several generations have suffered, even to this day, and aboriginal women and girls are overrepresented in human trafficking in Canada.

Migrant workers in Canada are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse because of their isolation and precarious status. There is no mandatory monitoring system in the program to ensure program terms and conditions are respected. Thus, while many employers respect their employees, other unscrupulous employers exploit migrant workers without being penalized. Temporary Foreign Workers work in a variety of trades, such as preparing or serving meals in fast food restaurants, working on farms or in factories to produce the food we eat, or caring for children. The fact that the work permit is linked to a specific employer is an aggravating factor in the risk of trafficking in human beings for forced labor. Seasonal agricultural workers may apply for another work permit, but cannot work until they have received it. In collaboration with the Canadian Council for Refugees, CATHII is asking that Canada abolish work permits tied to a specific employer and grant an open work permit, while taking measures to protect temporary foreign workers against abuse.

For several years, CATHII has been encouraging Canada to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 189 on decent work for domestic workers and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

CATHII prepared, for the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, a document for **the Universal Periodic Review** of Canada. Indeed, NGOs have the opportunity to give a clear picture of how their state is fulfilling its human rights obligations. CATHII did this from the perspective of human trafficking and also sent a delegate to Geneva to attend this review in April.

In February 2016, The Globe and Mail published an article noting estimates of the amounts of money spent on combatting trafficking and providing victim services. The article concluded that 90% of the spending was allocated to the application of legislation and to combatting international trafficking, and that less than 10% went to victim support.

Our recommendation: That Canada commit to a global approach to research and data collection on the different forms of human trafficking in Canada in collaboration with trafficked persons, various community groups, the police, as well as legal and civil authorities.

Another recommendation: That the federal government, in partnership with the provinces, provide adequate funding to coalitions and organizations with the expertise to provide assistance, accompaniment and support services for trafficked persons in order to guarantee them short-, medium- and long-term protection, aid and support.

As for the "**runaway crisis**", on Jesus Island, near Montreal, the figure dropped to about 400 runaways in 2016 and 2017. Several men, seeking to buy juvenile prostitution services on the web, have come face-to-face with police officers who handcuffed them. If found guilty of seeking the sexual services of a minor, they face a minimum sentence of six months in prison.

Laval police officers visited erotic dance bars in their city on June 14 and met nearly 80 dancers aged 18 to 50. The goal was to build relationships so the dancers would not hesitate to call for help if they experienced violence, aggression or exploitation. Police and municipal authorities are also putting pressure on erotic massage parlors, where there is a lot of prostitution. The City has legislated to restrict the locations where these establishments may operate on its territory, and the police have assigned a special officer to monitor them. The result is that the number of establishments has decreased from approximately twenty to ten erotic massage parlors.

Working together, Laval interveners, police, and community organizations refuse to speak of "prostitutes", always preferring to speak of "victims". In the same vein, they use the term "abuser" rather than "client" and "exploiter" rather than "pimp".

Interveners working on the issue also invite citizens to sign the "Laval Declaration against Sexual Exploitation", a condemnation of the commodification of sexual services by minors.

"What people are asked to do is to get involved so that it becomes a sort of collective movement of Laval residents, and even beyond," exclaims Vincent Forcier, Director of Communications at

the Laval Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS). Although the signature-collection campaign has not even officially begun, 500 people have already signed.