

Freedom Relay raises money for Canada's victims of human trafficking



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Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing crimes in the world and during a 12.5 Km march Saturday an Ottawa group wants to draw attention to the fact it happens right here at home.

“We only know of cases popularized by the media,” said Rachel Steele, a spokesperson for the National Freedom Relay Sept. 15. “Most recently we had the case of the teenage girls in June [accused of forcing other girls into prostitution \(http://metronews.ca/news/ottawa/258390/teen-girls-charged-with-human-trafficking-pimping/\)](http://metronews.ca/news/ottawa/258390/teen-girls-charged-with-human-trafficking-pimping/). But when most people think of human trafficking, they think of the movie Taken.”

The RCMP pegs the number of people trafficked in and through Canada every year at 800 to 1,200. As of February, there were 50 ongoing trafficking cases being prosecuted in Canada and 158 victims.

“It’s usually organized crime,” said Steele. “With drugs and the gun trade it’s a one-time transaction. With human beings it’s a recurring transaction that could generate income for years.”

The government and international organizations have identified Canada as a source, transit point and destination for trafficking victims. Women, men and children have all been sold into forced labour and prostitution.

The march will set out from the human rights monument on Elgin St. near city hall at 8:00 a.m. All money raised will go to prevention and recovery initiatives for human trafficking survivors.



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