

# Trafficking in persons in Canada, 2016

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Trafficking in persons, or human trafficking, is a global issue and a phenomenon difficult to measure. It is highly underreported due to its hidden nature. According to the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, there were 340 incidents of human trafficking in 2016, accounting for about 0.02% of all criminal incidents reported by the police. These violations represented a rate of about 1 incident for every 100,000 Canadians.

While trafficking in persons represents a minority of incidents which come to the attention of police, it can have severe and immeasurable impacts on victims, their loved ones and the community at large. Analysis of police-reported human trafficking incidents, including victim and accused characteristics over an eight-year period, is being released today in the *Juristat Bulletin—Quick Fact* article "[Trafficking in persons in Canada, 2016](#)."

From 2009 to 2016, there were 1,099 police-reported incidents which involved a human trafficking offence. The number and rate of human trafficking incidents has risen steadily since 2010. These increases may be attributable to an actual increase in prevalence, as well as reflect the additional training and resources dedicated to trafficking investigations and the creation of new *Criminal Code* subsections allowing police to better report and classify these offences.

The vast majority of human trafficking victims were women (95%), and 70% were women under the age of 25. At the same time, most offenders in these incidents were male (81%). Two-thirds (66%) of those accused of a human trafficking offence from 2009 to 2016 were young men aged 18 to 34.

Just over half (51%) of human trafficking incidents from 2009 to 2016 involved at least one other violation. Among the majority (89%) of these incidents, human trafficking was the most serious offence in the incident. Secondary violations often involved a prostitution-related offence.

According to adult criminal court records, there were 306 completed cases from 2008/2009 to 2015/2016 which included at least one human trafficking offence. Among these cases, 84 involved human trafficking as the most serious offence in the case, and the majority resulted in a court decision of either stayed or withdrawn.

## Note to readers

*The category of human trafficking in the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey includes six Criminal Code offences, and an offence under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act which targets international cross-border trafficking. Police services can report up to four violations for each criminal incident.*

*Criminal Code offences: trafficking in persons; trafficking in persons under 18 years; material benefit; material benefit from trafficking of persons under 18 years; withholding or destroying documents; and withholding or destroying documents to facilitate trafficking of persons under 18 years.*

*Immigration and Refugee Protection Act: trafficking in persons.*

*Human trafficking is often confused with human smuggling. Human smuggling involves the illegal migration of individuals, for profit and with the individuals' consent, across international borders.*



**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3302](#) and [3312](#).**

The *Juristat Bulletin—Quick Fact* article, "[Trafficking in persons in Canada, 2016](#)," ([85-005-X](#)), is now available.

Also available today is the *Juristat Bulletin-Quick Fact* "[Overview of the Adult Criminal Justice System](#)" ([85-005-X](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).