



## **The Centre**

Canadian Centre to  
End Human Trafficking.

# **Act now to prevent exploitation at the 2026 FIFA World Cup**

Proposal to:

The Government of Canada  
The Government of British Columbia  
The Government of Ontario  
The City of Toronto  
The City of Vancouver

The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking  
March 2024

## SUMMARY

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The 2026 FIFA World Cup is fast approaching and has the potential to bring significant economic, cultural and community benefits to Canada. At the same time, large events create opportunities for exploitation and abuse. Recent history suggests that labour trafficking and workplace exploitation is common as countries build infrastructure they need to host the games. Over the past decade the news media has reported that World Cup host countries – including [Qatar](#), [Russia](#), and [Brazil](#) – have used trafficked and exploited workers to complete major infrastructure projects tied to the tournament.

On October 12, 2023, The Centre – along with our counterparts, [Polaris](#) and [Consejo](#) – presented to a Tri-lateral Working Group meeting of Canadian, American and Mexican government officials. The objective was to inform collaborative measures to prevent exploitation from taking place at the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Policymakers must ensure that abusive labour practices do not occur when Canada prepares to host the World Cup. Upgrades to existing infrastructure – including the addition of new seating at BMO Field and renovations at B.C. Place – will require manual labour. In order to ensure that the World Cup is free from exploitation, collaboration is needed between federal, provincial and municipal governments, as well as with Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment, B.C. Pavilion Corporation, Team Canada and corporate sponsors. More specifically, policymakers can curb exploitation and abuse by:

- 1. Establishing processes that ensure that only good and fair jobs are created prior and during the World Cup.** Standard labour inspections and legal requirements placed on contractors are not enough to deter abuse. Due diligence measures are needed. A labour rights watch dog should also be appointed by the federal government to ensure that dedicated staff are reviewing contracts and monitoring labour conditions.

Further, policymakers should apply an anti-human trafficking lens when designing processes and contracts to ensure that safeguards are put in place at every step. At each stage of the process, policymakers should be asking: Are there historically marginalized individuals involved in this stage who could be susceptible to abuse? What steps are we taking to ensure these individuals are protected? What are we doing to *proactively* monitor workplace conditions, inform workers of their rights, and hold abusers to account? How are we making it easier for exploited individuals to report their abuse? And what protections are in place to ensure that victims can report their abuse without compromising their safety and employment security?

Applying an anti-human trafficking lens allows decision-makers to view all processes from a perspective that will make it easier to identify, deter and punish abusive labour practices.

- 2. Raising awareness of labour rights in Canada.** A 2023 study by the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking engaged 77 migrant workers in focus groups to better understand working conditions in Ontario. Approximately 60% of these workers indicated that they had

not received information about their labour rights.<sup>1</sup> Seventy-one percent said that they wanted to learn about their rights prior to coming to Canada or immediately upon arrival. After visiting Pearson International Airport in 2023, staff at The Centre identified missed opportunities to distribute critical information to migrant workers.<sup>2</sup> Federal, provincial and municipal governments could address this gap through a pilot project that makes material on labour rights more accessible. For example, banners could be placed in airport screening rooms, border agents could pass out pamphlets, information could be advertised on GO Trains and the UP Express, and TTC and TransLink stations and stops could include posters.

- 3. Raising awareness of sex trafficking.** Although there is limited evidence that sex trafficking increases during major events, it's important that governments remain vigilant and prepare to support those who are exploited. Following the 2006 World Cup in Germany, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) released a report that pointed to the importance of a centralized information campaign to reducing trafficking incidences:

One large, comprehensive and professionally organized campaign covering different target groups, and with an overall consistent message, may have been even more effective than the combination of several separate campaigns... A coordinated media approach, possibly accompanied by media training, may ensure that the issue of [human trafficking] receives the necessary public attention, while at the same time ensuring that journalists are made familiar with the correct definition...and disseminating facts rather than hype.<sup>3</sup>

Education on the signs of trafficking and how survivors can access support is critical. The Centre have developed a series of [materials](#) that bring attention to the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline. When they've been deployed, these resources have resulted in higher call volume to the Hotline among victims and survivors. Governments should leverage these and other assets to launch a coordinated campaign to raise awareness of sex trafficking and the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline during the World Cup. It's important that education and awareness materials should focus on reaching victims/survivors directly, rather than establishing more salacious campaigns that have the potential to create unintentional harms.

- 4. Engaging anti-human trafficking organizations in World Cup preparations.** Survivor leaders, front-line service agencies and anti-human trafficking advocates have unique perspectives that can inform government policy and process. One of the key findings from the IOM report was that "an early and reliable situation assessment with regard to [human trafficking] in cooperation with local experts from the police, international organizations and NGOs is extremely important."<sup>4</sup> In keeping with this, governments should seek to formally incorporate these views into World Cup planning tables and discussions.

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking (2023). *It Happens Here: Labour Exploitation Among Migrant Workers During the Pandemic*. Accessed online at: <https://www.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CCTEHT---Labour-Trafficking-Report-ENG-1.pdf>, p. 16

<sup>2</sup> Steps have since been taken by the Government of Canada to compel employers to share information on labour rights with their migrant workforce.

<sup>3</sup> International Organization for Migration ( ), *Trafficking in Human Beings and the 2006 World Cup in Germany*. IOM Migration Research Series, Accessed online at: <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mrs29.pdf>, p. 32

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**Recommendation #1:** Sign the pledge that only “good and fair jobs” will be created for the 2026 World Cup. The pledge, which is enclosed in the Addendum, commits your government to establishing due diligence practices in government protocol and applying an anti-human trafficking lens on all processes and contracts tied to the tournament.

**Recommendation #2:** Work with federal, provincial and municipal leaders to establish a labour rights pilot project. This initiative would make information and materials more available to migrant workers at Pearson International Airport, Vancouver International Airport, Billy Bishop Airport, regional airports, and on transit buses, trains, and stations.

**Recommendation #3:** Create a centralized communication campaign that raises awareness of sex trafficking and how survivors can access support. The campaign should focus on at-risk individuals, take advantage of existing materials, and be incorporated into the planning stages of the World Cup

**Recommendation #4:** Formally involve survivor leaders and organizations dedicated to preventing exploitation and human trafficking as part of Canada’s World Cup planning structure. These individuals and organizations should be engaged on communication campaigns and provide advice on how governments can deter trafficking and align services to support survivors.

## **CONTACTS**

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Julia Drydyk, Executive Director, The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking  
[jdrydyk@ccteht.ca](mailto:jdrydyk@ccteht.ca)

James McLean, Director of Research & Policy, The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking  
[jmclean@ccteht.ca](mailto:jmclean@ccteht.ca)

## **THE PLEDGE FOR GOOD AND FAIR JOBS DURING 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP**

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Canada's successful bid to host the FIFA 2026 World Cup – one of the largest sporting events in the world – has the potential to bring considerable economic, cultural and community benefits to Toronto and Vancouver.

At the same time, citizens expect that the planning and execution of the tournament must adhere to Canada's core values, including practicing ethical standards and upholding human rights and dignity.

The need to upgrade infrastructure and facilities in the lead up to the World Cup presents opportunities for labour abuse and exploitation.

In response, our government hereby commits that every job created for the 2026 FIFA World Cup will be a good and fair job, free from abuse. Our government further commits that:

- All procurement contracts will include stipulations that contractors and sub-contractors must abide by federal and provincial labour law;
- Steps will be taken to ensure that World Cup construction sites are regularly monitored for abuse;
- Steps will be taken to ensure that survivor leaders and anti-human trafficking organizations are engaged and able to share insights into how to prevent abuse during the tournament and support survivors
- Staff will ensure that posters for the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline with the toll-free number (1-833-900-1010) are visibly displayed at all construction sites

**Signed**

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