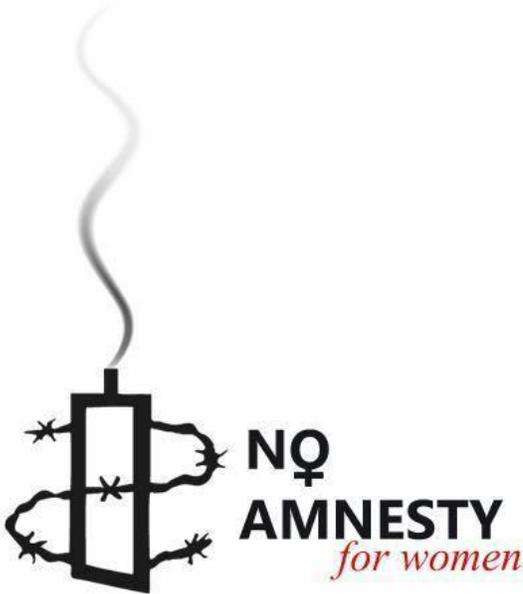


Canadian Advocates for the Nordic Model (CANM)



Amnesty International has sought a policy to protect the human rights of women in prostitution who they identify as “sex workers”. The manifesto specifically says that it wishes to decriminalize “all aspects of consensual adult sex work that doesn’t involve coercion, exploitation or abuse.”¹

Alan Young, counsel for the applicants in the Bedford case told the court that 5, 10 or 20% of the women in prostitution were there by choice.² Several studies show that 5 – 10% of women are in prostitution by choice.³ That means 90-95% of women or 9 out of 10 women are in prostitution **not** by choice – they are coerced, trafficked or exploited. They cannot leave. They cannot make their own decisions. Does Amnesty still identify these 90% of women as “sex workers”? How does Amnesty International propose to protect the human rights of these 90%?

Amnesty International believes that “prostitution is a human right”. Whose human right is it? The buyers, the pimps, or the sellers?

Decriminalising all aspects of prostitution turns pimps into business managers, johns into customers and prostituted women into workers. If a “worker” has a bad “work experience”, their remedy is to appeal under employment legislation. The police and criminal law is not there to protect her. If she’s assaulted by a “customer”, the customer will claim consent and contract after all, she has agreed to provide sexual relations for money. How are the police to determine whether the “contract” was transgressed? Was it just rough sex? Or maybe it would be considered just regular torture perceived as consent for sadomasochism.⁴

As only 5-10% of women are in prostitution willingly without coercion, it follows that the demand exceeds supply by 90%. How does Amnesty International’s proposal provide THESE women with human rights – human right not to be abused, human right

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/08/sex-workers-rights-are-human-rights/>

² <http://www.feminisms.org/3265/the-myths-of-bedford-v-canada-why-decriminalizing-prostitution-won%E2%80%99t-help/>

³ <http://www.catwinternational.org/Content/Images/Article/234/attachment.pdf>

⁴ Email communication from Data Dissemination Officer Statistics Canada, July 27, 2009.

not to be tortured, human right to be treated with dignity? Or do THESE women not have human rights?

The only way to protect these women is to decriminalize their involvement in prostitution so that they can freely seek the help of police, social services or other support and to criminalise the abusers – the pimps and the johns. If the acts of selling and buying of woman in prostitution are decriminalised, women have to prove they were coerced, trafficked, exploited or tortured. This is more difficult evidentially. Especially difficult for women tortured as Canada has no specific law that addresses torture perpetrated by private individuals or groups; although it is known that women in prostitution suffer acts of torture.^{5,6} Decriminalising the demand for the purchase of women in prostitution will allow for an explosion of brothels and organized crime groups with more vulnerable women being trafficked. Just look at Germany⁷ and Australia⁸ where there is now no regulation on brothels and foreigners are being brought into the country to “work” in the brothels.

THEREFORE, WE THE UNDERSIGNED CALL FOR ACTION

It's imperative to revisit and cancel this abominable policy and support the Nordic Model. It's imperative to protect hundreds of thousands of vulnerable women who are in prostitution unwillingly. The only way to do so is to decriminalize them but criminalize the pimps and the johns. Those who choose to enter prostitution, frankly have other choices.

Dated September 11, 2015

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⁵ <http://www.cbc.ca/bc/news/bc-100820-vancouver-police-pickton-investigation-review.pdf>

⁶ Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre. (2014). Domestic human trafficking for sexual exploitation in Canada October 2013 (p. 22). Ottawa: RCMP.

⁷ <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/human-trafficking-persists-despite-legality-of-prostitution-in-germany-a-902533-2.html>

⁸ <http://www.catwa.org.au/?q=node/37>