



MAYOR REPORT TO COUNCIL

1100 Patricia Blvd. | Prince George, BC, Canada V2L 3V9 | www.princegeorge.ca

DATE: January 30, 2024

TO: COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Simon Yu, Mayor

SUBJECT: Participation in the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day 2024

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council DECLARES February 22, 2024, National Human Trafficking Awareness Day and APPROVES the draft resolution set out in the report dated January 30, 2024 from Mayor Yu titled "Participation in the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day 2024."

PURPOSE:

To provide Council with information on the opportunity to locally mark the February 22nd National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. This item is being raised on its own merit and due to strong alignment with work being undertaken at the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs related to better understanding the municipalities' role in addressing human trafficking.

BACKGROUND:

Survivors of human trafficking, and agencies that provide services to those who are impacted by this crime, encourage municipalities to help mark the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on February 22nd of each year. The 22nd day of February has been chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the unanimous declaration of the House of Commons on February 22nd, 2007, to condemn all forms of human trafficking and slavery. The National Human Trafficking Awareness Day was established in 2021.

Municipal participation may be considered through a proclamation, as an example. While a proclamation does not require a council resolution, it is being raised in this format to help draw attention to the seriousness of this issue and related criminal acts such as gender based and intimate partner violence.

Further awareness is assessed as necessary as, according to national data, only one in five intimate partner violence crimes are reported to police. Despite under reporting the number of police reports rose across the country in each year between 2015 and 2021 according to Statistics Canada¹.

¹ Victims of police-reported family and intimate partner violence in Canada, 2021

Here in BC, the BC Prosecution Service began releasing statistics about intimate partner violence files in its 2022 annual report. Examining the number of reports received from police recommending criminal charges in these cases shows that for the five previous years, one in five reports submitted to Crown counsel has been an intimate partner violence file. In terms of the actual number of files, the five-year average is 13,221 – which works out to 36 files per day if spread across 365 days, according to the 2022/2023 BC Prosecution Service report².

With that context in mind, draft language for a pledge to participate in the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day could take the following form:

WHEREAS Canada, since 2021, marks the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on February 22nd of each year. A date chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the unanimous declaration of the House of Commons in 2007, to condemn all forms of human trafficking and slavery; and

WHEREAS the incidences of gender-based violence and intimate-partner violence, which are tied often to the crime of human trafficking, have increased dramatically in British Columbia;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Prince George solemnly participates in the annual National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Further, the City of Prince George calls on the provincial and federal governments to provide the necessary support to the emergency, social, health and police services to meaningfully address this crime.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Work to better understand the municipalities' role in combating crime, including human trafficking, may be considered in relation to the City's strategic pillar of Social Health and Well Being. Specifically, ensuring a safe, healthy, and clean community for all. Raising awareness, through a proclamation, is a low barrier action that can be taken while other avenues are considered.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

None. Support to proclamations is within the scope of staff's regular work.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

February 22nd is the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Council may wish to have the City participate in the day to help raise awareness of the issue.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Simon Yu, Mayor

Meeting Date: Enter 2024/02/05

² BC Prosecution Service Annual Report 2022/23