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PRESS RELEASE

World Vision urges government to prosecute if traffickers and smugglers found but protect children and families onboard Sri Lankan boat

World Vision applauds the government's intention to seek out and prosecute any traffickers and smugglers involved in the situation with the boat of Sri Lankan people off the B.C. coast. However, the agency is most concerned with the protection of any children and families that will be entering Canada and urges the government to ensure that they receive adequate physical, emotional and psycho-social support.

With the recent passage of Bill C-268, which imposes minimum sentences for child traffickers, World Vision says the government must now act strongly if any traffickers are found and ensure this new law is enforced. The need for increased coordination between various levels of government and civil society as well as the national concern for the people on this boat makes this an ideal time for Canada to develop a national strategy against human trafficking to address the global and national aspects of this crime.

World Vision urges the British Columbia church and faith community to mobilize now to assist in providing support in this situation. The agency funds two refugee welcome centres in Vancouver and anticipates that these facilities will be used to ease the transition and trauma of the families on board.

Facts

- Canada is known as a source, transit and destination country for child trafficking.
- Canada's law that imposes minimum sentences on child traffickers was passed in June. It has the full support of World Vision and other anti-trafficking organizations.
- Globally as many as 1.2 million children are trafficked annually.
- Women and children make up 88 percent of all trafficking victims.
- World Vision is actively engaged in programs around the world to end or mitigate human trafficking. The agency's strategies to reduce trafficking revolve around reducing vulnerabilities, influencing governments and assisting trafficking survivors, with particular emphasis on child protection, safe migration and improved policy.

Links: [World Vision Report on Child Trafficking](#)

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"The children on that boat have been through way too much already. Canada's first priority must be to protect them. We would prefer that these children never enter a detention centre at all when they first arrive in Canada, but if they do, they should always remain with their families and their transition to a supportive refugee centre or church community should be quick."

- Caroline Riseboro,
VP Public Affairs,
World Vision Canada