

Handling Harassment, Aggression and Violence Fatality File

13 men, including an American, arrested at Canada hotel and charged with luring minors for sexual abuse.

Canadian police arrested 13 men, including a U.S. national over a four-day period this month in an operation at a hotel in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and all 13 have been charged with child sex trafficking offenses, the Niagara Regional Police Service said. The individuals were arrested as part of a project launched by the Niagara police targeting people using the internet to arrange meetings with minors they believed to be offering sexual services for money.

The suspects range in age from 20 to 60 years old, and they were all arrested at the same hotel between Jan. 31 and Feb. 3, the police said. The charges against them include encouraging or advising sexual exploitation of a minor, engaging in sexual activities with a young person and luring a child for the purpose of obtaining sexual services.

Among those being held is a 60-year-old U.S. citizen from Buffalo, New York. The police have not released the men's names.

"These arrests showcase the dedication of our members in ensuring some of the most vulnerable members of our community are protected, sending a strong message that the predatory behaviors associated with human trafficking will not be tolerated in Niagara," Niagara police chief Bill Fordy said in a statement.

"We are committed to fighting human trafficking through intelligence-gathering and working cooperatively with law enforcement and community partners to support victims and enforcement efforts. Integrated resources, the sharing of

information, a victim-centered approach and community partnerships are crucial to law enforcement's effective response to this kind of crime." The project received assistance from multiple law enforcement and agencies, police said.

Canada's Ontario province, which sits on the Great Lakes and borders several U.S. states, has consistently reported the highest rates of human trafficking cases in the country. According to data compiled by the government agency Statistics Canada, between 2012 and 2022, Ontario has ranked second with 1.6 reported incidents per 100,000 people.

Indigenous women and girls are disproportionately affected by human trafficking in Canada, with immigrants, the LGBTQ community, children in the welfare system, people with disabilities and other at-risk youths also heavily impacted, according to the Niagara police.