



McGill



MAX BELL SCHOOL
of PUBLIC POLICY

Monday, September 18th

PLAZA 4

2:00pm-3:00pm

INVESTIGATING AND PROSECUTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE DIGITAL SPACE: THE CASE OF CANADA

About the Workshop

This interactive workshop is for stakeholders and person interested in working in the anti-human trafficking sector .The workshop broadly addresses some of the key issues related to online human trafficking and the challenges surrounding the management of digital evidence in Canada. Besides offering a systematic assessment of the current situation, some solutions towards spearheading action by the provincial and federal governments will also be discussed.

Fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic, human traffickers have rapidly adjusted their illegal operations to adopt new digital and online technologies ranging from chat rooms, smartphones, and video surveillance to money transfers and digital currencies. The result is a large illicit marketplace for hunting, fishing, and recruiting potential trafficking victims, producing and sharing offensive content and controlling victims. This crime is highly profitable and is driven by demand, pricing and competition. Thanks to new technologies, traffickers see no physical barriers in recruiting and exploiting victims.

Arguably, the justice system in Canada has not kept pace with the new realities. The growing use of the internet by human traffickers necessitates the justice system recalibrating traditional strategies for gathering and managing evidence. It can no longer be business as usual and the overreliance on victims' testimony is no longer a fitting approach.

About the Presenter

Dr Olivia Smith, PhD in Political Science, a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Human Resources Management, and a BA (Hons) in History & Political Science

Dr Olivia Smith is a Visiting Scholar and Professor at the Max Bell School of Public Policy, McGill University, she was also the 2021 O'Brien Fellow in Residence and Affiliate with the Oppenheimer Chair in Public International Law held by Professor François Crépeau. She is also a consultant on labour migration and human trafficking and the Executive Director of the Caribbean Anti-Human Trafficking Foundation, a member of the Working Group of Experts on Human Trafficking, Recruitment Agencies, Agents for The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, London, UK, and a Gender Rights Specialized Team member, Amnesty International (Canada).