



Homelessness has become an emergency and your voice and a little kindness can break the silence

By Margaret Eskins
Executive Director DARS
Dedicated Advocacy Resource Support

With growing concern about toxic fentanyl in the drug supply, people who use drugs are facing grave danger. Today, outside the gas station at Whites Road and Kingston Road in Pickering , I saw a man lying on the ground in a position that made me fear the worst. I recognized it as the same one many other Fentanyl users find themselves in when the get into trouble.. I ran over with my phone and naloxone in hand. No one else seemed to stop or even act surprised even though there were a few waiting right there for the next bus. They watched from afar. It felt as though a black curtain had fallen around myself and the man in a position where I wasn't sure I could even help him.

The man was very difficult to wake. Finally with some forceful nudging right under his shoulder blade he roused enough to allow me to move him to a sitting position on the bench. Eventually, he told me who he was and shared a little of his story. He has been homeless over a year living in Pickering. He was hoping to use the DARS warming centre. He was cold and needed somewhere to go. But it is still 60 days until it opens on December 1. Our Winter Warming Centre operates at nighttime only and individuals must still find other spaces to stay warm during the day. Until then, he has to find a way to survive outside.

He looked frail and unwell. When I offered to get him lunch or water, he asked for a mint chocolate Aero bar. I learned his teeth were gone and he found most food too difficult to chew. I went to the store and returned with two bars and a protein drink. He was thrilled beyond belief. How sad I recall feeling. By then, a young police officer was speaking with him. The man said he had experienced a seizure. This was the same explanation he had given me. Fire crews arrived but were waved off by the officer who said it looked like I had things under control and she, to the man's relief, left too. I offered him information about our services and called Street Outreach at 311. He was alive but I had little control over his situation nor the broader homeless epidemic. Once again I felt the black curtain fall. I'm not blaming first responders. Their hands are often tied and when they do intervene their efforts are met with no beds, no help, no change for the individuals they attempt to serve and protect.

This encounter stayed with me. Homelessness is an emergency. Addiction, poor and declining mental health and limited access to timely, intensive care are adding pressure to a system that needs new solutions now. Governments at every level, together with frontline organizations, must work differently and act urgently.

More than 2,000 people in Durham Region alone are living without housing. These are our neighbours, sons, brothers, sisters and daughters. How is this okay? Whether you blame the individuals or not, and I hope you don't, this is so unacceptable in a country as rich as Canada. The next time you see someone in distress, offer kindness and help if you can. Carry naloxone; it is available free at many pharmacies and they will train you how to administer it. It's actually a simple nose spray. LEARN CPR!! If someone appears to be in immediate danger, don't hesitate to call 911.

Then call your MPP and MP. Tell them homelessness is not going away, and that people cannot wait for help until winter—or until their next crisis. We already have a crisis!!!

Marine Unit Rescues Distressed Boaters on Lake Ontario

A vessel and its occupants were safely escorted to shore after being observed in distress on Lake Ontario.

On Wednesday, September 30, 2026, West Division received a call for service regarding a vessel observed on Lake Ontario that appeared to be in distress.

Members of the DRPS Marine Unit were conducting training exercises on Lake Ontario when they responded to the call. Officers located the vessel a considerable distance from shore, as the small aluminum vessel was experiencing difficulty navigating the rough waters.

Two DRPS Marine Unit vessels safely escorted the vessel and its three occupants back to shore without incident.

No injuries were reported.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Sgt. Ricard of the DRPS Marine Unit at 905-579-1520 ext. 5252.

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Carney needs to explain his U.S. invasion talk

What motivated the prime minister to publicly raise a threat he says is extremely unlikely? Prime Minister Mark Carney has some explaining to do.

On Wednesday, he told the New York Times that he had examined the possibility that U.S. President Donald Trump might order military action against Canada, a scenario Carney described as an “extreme tail risk.” In plain English, he was talking about an event he considers extremely unlikely but serious enough to prepare for. Preparing for unlikely threats is part of responsible government. Publicly raising the possibility that Canada's closest ally might invade us is another matter. So why did Carney do it? Trump has given Canadians plenty of reasons to question our relationship with Washington. He has repeatedly talked about Canada becoming the 51st state and used tariffs and economic threats against us. But when asked directly in January 2025 whether he would use military force to acquire Canada, Trump said no. His preferred pressure, he said, was “economic force.” Canada would be foolish to ignore Trump's rhetoric and economic threats, but there is a big difference between an American president threatening Canada's economy and an American president threatening to invade Canada.

Canada and the United States are not simply neighbours. We have worked together through NORAD, the joint military command responsible for defending North America, since 1958. Carney is publicly discussing the possibility of military action by the country Canada has relied on for decades as the cornerstone of its continental defence.

Earlier this year, Canadians learned that the military had modelled a hypothetical U.S. invasion. That may sound ominous, but militaries routinely consider unlikely scenarios as part of contingency planning. The exercise was conceptual and theoretical, not an actual military plan. But the military's contingency planning is not the issue. Carney has now given that remote scenario something it did not have before: the public attention of the prime minister himself.

Carney's remarks also came as he was arguing that Canada must reduce its economic and strategic dependence on the United States, including its reliance on American military technology. Portraying the United States as a potential military threat does, however, change the political calculation in Ottawa. Major shifts in defence, trade and foreign policy become easier to sell when they can be presented as necessary to protect Canadian sovereignty. We don't know whether that was Carney's intention. But a prime minister should not publicly elevate the possibility of war with Canada's closest ally without a compelling reason. If Ottawa has evidence suggesting the threat has become more serious, Carney should say so. If it doesn't, he should explain what Canadian interest was served by putting such an extraordinary possibility into the public conversation.

Oil markets are giving us a false sense of security

By Rashid Husain Syed

The longer the war lasts, the thinner our energy safety net gets Global oil markets have proved remarkably resilient during seven months of war in the Middle East. But that resilience may be giving consumers a false sense of security. Oil is still reaching world markets despite severe disruption to the Strait of Hormuz and the Sept. 11 attack on Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline. Prices are high, but they have not reached the levels many feared when the war began on Feb. 28.

The stakes are enormous. Before the war, about 20 million barrels of oil and other petroleum liquids passed through Hormuz each day, equivalent to roughly one-fifth of global consumption. Few practical alternatives exist for moving that much oil out of the Persian Gulf.

So the fact that oil continues to reach world markets does not mean the global oil system has comfortably absorbed the shock. The world is using many of the safeguards available to keep the oil flowing, leaving fewer options if another major disruption occurs.

When shipping through the Strait of Hormuz was disrupted, Saudi Arabia relied heavily on its East-West pipeline to move crude from its eastern oilfields to Yanbu on the Red Sea coast. The United Arab Emirates similarly relied on its pipeline carrying crude from Abu Dhabi to Fujairah, outside the strait.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE are better placed than most Gulf producers because they have pipelines capable of carrying substantial volumes of crude to terminals outside Hormuz. These routes helped prevent a much more serious supply shock, although they cannot replace all the oil normally shipped through the strait.

But the vulnerability of relying on these alternative routes became clear when Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline was attacked on Sept. 11. The pipeline has capacity to carry about seven million barrels per day and had been moving roughly 5.5 million barrels per day before the attack.

Saudi Arabia has since resumed operations on the East-West pipeline and tanker loadings at Yanbu, easing some of the immediate pressure. But the episode exposed an uncomfortable reality: alternative routes provide protection only as long as those routes remain operational.

With oil flows to Yanbu disrupted, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf producers were forced to turn once again to the Strait of Hormuz. Ship operators willing to accept the risk have been using a U.S.-supervised corridor near Oman, and Gulf producers have increasingly relied on that route since the attack on the Saudi pipeline.

Analysts estimate that six million to seven million barrels per day are now moving through this southern route. Combined with about two million barrels per day moving through the UAE pipeline to Fujairah, roughly eight million barrels per day of the 15 million barrels disrupted at the beginning of the war have been restored, leaving about seven million barrels per day still missing from prewar flows.

U.S. Central Command says American forces have assisted 2,000 commercial ship transits carrying more than one billion barrels of oil from Gulf producers in recent months.

Military-protected tanker traffic has helped prevent a severe supply shortage. But when commercial tankers require military assistance to move crude through one of the world's most important energy corridors, the oil market is hardly functioning normally.

Existing oil inventories have helped make up some of the difference. About 3.5 million barrels per day are being drawn from inventories around the world, while China has relied heavily on its own stocks and bought less crude than usual on international markets.

These inventories can stabilize markets today, but every barrel used leaves less available to deal with another supply shock until stocks are replenished.

Higher prices and sluggish economic growth have also reduced global demand, while producers outside the region, including the United States, have added hundreds of thousands of barrels per day of additional supply.

Put all these factors together and the reason oil prices have not skyrocketed becomes clearer. The market has compensated for disrupted Middle Eastern oil traffic through existing inventories, alternative pipelines, additional production, risky tanker movements and lower consumption.

The global oil system has proved remarkably flexible, but each of these responses has limits. Oil inventories cannot be drawn down indefinitely. Lower demand caused by high prices and weaker economic growth comes at a cost. Tankers moving through a conflict zone face higher insurance and transportation costs. Alternative pipelines can themselves be attacked. And additional production elsewhere cannot necessarily be increased quickly enough to compensate for another major loss of supply.

China is already moving to protect domestic supplies. Chinese refiners have suspended most fuel exports for October as the country seeks to preserve domestic inventories depleted during the crisis. That matters because countries relying on inventories and other emergency measures will eventually have to protect what they have left.

Another successful attack on critical oil infrastructure, a further reduction in tanker traffic through Hormuz or another major loss of Middle Eastern production would therefore hit a market with fewer options available to cushion the shock.

Seven months of war have demonstrated the resilience of the global oil system. Existing inventories, alternative pipelines, additional production, risky tanker movements and weaker demand have kept enough oil moving to prevent the crisis many feared.

But these measures have limits. The longer the conflict continues, the more difficult it will become to absorb the next serious supply shock.