

THE BLUE CAMPAIGN



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Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery involving the illegal trade of human beings for the purpose of exploitation or commercial gain. It is an inhumane act that robs a person of his or her freedom, and it is a crime. Human trafficking is detrimental to our economy, the safety and health of our nation, and the very dignity of our society.

Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked in countries around the world, including the United States. It is estimated that human trafficking is a \$32 billion per year industry, second only to drug trafficking as the most profitable form of transnational crime.

Traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to lure their victims and then force them into labor or commercial sexual exploitation. Human trafficking is not the same as smuggling. “Trafficking” is exploitation-based and does not require movement across borders. Under federal law, every minor induced to engage in commercial sex is a victim of human trafficking. “Smuggling” is movement-based and involves moving a person across a country’s border, with that person’s consent, in violation of immigration laws.

Human trafficking exists nationwide—in cities, suburbs, and rural towns—and in our own communities. Although human trafficking is widespread, many victims go unnoticed. Victims rarely come forward to seek help out of fear of their traffickers, language barriers, and/or fear of law enforcement. For this reason, human trafficking has largely remained a hidden crime.

Until now.

Blue Campaign: Join Us

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is responsible for investigating human trafficking, arresting traffickers, and protecting victims. DHS also provides immigration relief to foreign-born victims of human trafficking.

Blue Campaign is the unified voice for the DHS’ efforts to combat human trafficking. Working in collaboration with law enforcement, government, non-governmental and private organizations, Blue Campaign strives to protect the basic right of freedom and to bring those who exploit human lives to justice.

Increased awareness and training will lead to more tips to law enforcement, which results in more victims being identified.

We cannot do this alone. Join us in the fight to end human trafficking.

Visit the **Blue Campaign website** to learn about how we can work together and to learn about training, outreach materials, and victim assistance. Go to: www.dhs.gov/bluecampaign. “Like” us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/bluecampaign. Or, contact us at: BlueCampaign@hq.dhs.gov.

Source: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.



SUCCESS STORIES

Preying on the Vulnerable

At a Halloween party in Oxon Hill, Md., on Oct. 31, 2009, the trafficker met a 12-year-old runaway who asked for his help in finding a place to stay. Instead, the trafficker – a long-time member of the notorious MS-13 gang – forced the young girl into the commercial sex trade the very next day. For more than 3 months, he held her captive, coercing her to have sex for money multiple times a day at a variety of businesses, homes, apartments and hotels in Northern Virginia. Rescuing the victim and successfully prosecuting the perpetrator was the result of collaborative efforts by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations’ (HSI) National Gang Unit (NGU) with assistance from the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Task Force, all in keeping with the Blue Campaign mission.

From Trust to Trafficking

In Chicago, from 2008 through 2010, a trafficker recruited and groomed three women from the Ukraine and one from Belarus to become part of his “Family.” He offered them jobs, a place to live and lured each one into a romantic relationship with him. After gaining their trust, he confiscated their passports and identity documents. Then, he forced them to work long hours, often beating, mentally abusing, extorting and sexually exploiting them. HSI led the investigation in coordination with the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office and the Cook County Human Trafficking Task Force. Blue Campaign’s victim-centered approach ensured that the women received necessary victim assistance services. All four women testified as government witnesses at the trial.

False Promises of the American Dream

Three confirmed victims, along with 10 potential victims, were rescued from a sex trafficking ring operating in Georgia, Florida, and the Carolinas. The victims were enticed from Mexico and elsewhere to travel to the U.S. with false promises of the American dream. Once here, the women were cut off from their families. They were threatened and forced to commit sex acts throughout the Southeast.—one victim reported she was routinely beaten by her trafficker. The trafficking ring even allegedly arranged to hold one of their victims’ children hostage in Mexico to ensure her compliance as prostitutes in the U.S. The investigation, known as “Operation Dark Night” was lengthy; a true coordinated effort by key players supporting Blue Campaign. Operation Dark Night was led by HSI, with assistance from the FBI; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP); CBP Air and Marine Operations; the Internal Revenue Service’s Criminal Investigations; the Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department; the Chatham County Sheriff’s Office; the Garden City Police Department; and the Chatham-Savannah Counter Narcotics Team.

Imprisoned in your Neighborhood

The trafficker, a former resident of Georgia and a citizen of Nigeria, traveled to her home country in 2001 and enticed a 17-year old girl to come to the U.S. to work as her nanny. Once here, she abused the girl, beating her for not cleaning well, for not responding fast enough to her crying child, and for talking back to her. A witness to the abuse, a friend of hers, helped the victim escape. The defendant was not deterred and traveled back to Nigeria to lure a second victim, who was subjected to the same treatment and abuse. Eventually, the second victim also escaped. This case was investigated by HSI, the FBI and the State Department’s Diplomatic Security Service. It was complicated by the fact that the defendant left the country during the investigation. In a demonstration of the commitment of those supporting Blue Campaign, the defendant was found and arrested at a Houston airport as she tried to re-enter the country. She was prosecuted and convicted on eight counts by a federal jury.