



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

FACT SHEET

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Operation Predator: Targeting child exploitation and sexual crimes

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the largest investigative agency in the Department of Homeland Security, places a high priority on enforcing laws against child pornography, sexual exploitation, child sex tourism and other crimes against children. Under Operation Predator, the agency's flagship initiative targeting child sex predators, ICE has made more than 11,600 arrests since 2003.

Each year, millions of children fall prey to sexual predators. Experts estimate that one-in-five girls and one-in-10 boys in the United States will be sexually exploited before they reach adulthood. These young victims are left with permanent psychological, physical and emotional scars. Operation Predator identifies, investigates and arrests child pornographers, child sex tourists and facilitators, human smugglers and traffickers of minors, criminal aliens convicted of offenses against minors, and those deported for child exploitation offenses who have returned illegally.

Operation Predator draws on ICE's unique investigative and enforcement authorities to safeguard children. Coordinated nationally and internationally, this initiative brings together an array of ICE disciplines and resources to target these child sex abusers. As part of the effort:

- ICE has created a National Child Victim Identification System (NCVIS) in partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), the FBI, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, U.S. Secret Service, the Department of Justice, the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces and other agencies.
- ICE agents stationed internationally work with foreign governments, INTERPOL and others to enhance coordination and cooperation on crimes that cross borders.
- ICE is a member of the Virtual Global Taskforce, joining law enforcement agencies around the world to fight child exploitation information and images that travel over the Internet.

Operation Predator Results

ICE has arrested more than 11,600 child predators nationwide in its first five years, including a number of individuals who have committed a wide range of child sex exploitation crimes.

Non-Citizen Predators

Three-quarters of the arrests under Operation Predator have been arrests of non-citizen sex offenders whose crimes make them removable from the United States. Others must serve their sentences before being removed from the United States. These predators have included New Jersey, New York and California men who repeatedly molested their own daughters as well as an Austrian-national soccer coach convicted of fondling a mentally impaired minor.

Child Sex Tourists

Working cooperatively with foreign governments through ICE attaché offices worldwide, ICE agents have made 67 arrests under the child sex tourism provisions of the 2003 PROTECT Act. Of those, 47 have been convicted and others are still being prosecuted.

For example, in October 2008, a New Jersey man pleaded guilty in Newark to three counts of traveling to Thailand with the intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct, and one count each of producing and possessing child pornography. Wayne Nelson Corliss was the subject of a worldwide INTERPOL alert, based only on an anonymous photo, which brought ICE agents the leads they needed to locate and arrest him. Since then, two other men in Alabama have pleaded guilty to traveling with Corliss to Thailand to have sex with young boys. They are all awaiting sentencing.

Human Smuggling and Trafficking of Children

The criminal networks engaged in human smuggling and trafficking have become more violent and profit-driven than ever before. In one case, a predator tried to purchase 9- to 11-year-old girls from Mexico. ICE agents arrested the individual when he traveled to Arizona to have sex with the girls. In another case, ICE agents working undercover on the Internet encountered a Texas predator negotiating for a child online. His arrest led them to two other suspected predators.

Internet Child Pornography

Drawing on the agency's cybercrime investigative expertise and international law enforcement partnerships, ICE is tackling the crimes that cross the nation's virtual borders. In one major investigation, ICE agents arrested 669 individuals in the United States for trading, buying and distributing child pornography online. Acting on ICE investigative leads, law enforcement officials in Australia, Denmark, Finland, Japan, the Netherlands, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom arrested more than 1,900 individuals worldwide. Another operation resulted in the rescue of 12 children from molestation.

Predators Face Severe Penalties

Several laws increase the probability that sexual predators who harm children will suffer severe consequences, including the Mann Act, the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Act of 1994, the PROTECT Act of 2003 and the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006. Federal law bars U.S. residents from engaging in sexual or pornographic activities anywhere in the world with a child under 18. ICE is working with law enforcement agencies and advocacy groups around the globe to investigate crimes of this nature. Those convicted in the U.S. face significant penalties:

- Possession, manufacture, distribution of child pornography: Maximum 30 years in prison
- Child sex tourist, child sex tour operator, or participant in these crimes: Maximum 30 years in prison
- Sex trafficking of children for prostitution: Maximum life sentence

How You Can help

Report suspicious activity to ICE by telephone or e-mail:
1-866-DHS-2ICE or Operation.Predator@dhs.gov

Report suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) 1-800-843-5678 or www.cybertipline.com

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.