



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

Fact Sheet

OPERATION PREDATOR

Each year, millions of children fall prey to sexual predators.¹ Experts estimate that one-in-five girls and one-in-ten boys in the United States are sexually exploited before they reach adulthood.² These young victims are left with permanent psychological, physical, and emotional scars. That tragedy is compounded by the fact that child prostitution, human trafficking, child pornography, and international sex tourism now generate billions of dollars a year worldwide.

Seeking to reverse this trend and protect children worldwide, the Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) developed Operation Predator, an initiative to identify, investigate, and arrest child predators. Officially launched by Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge in July 2003, Operation Predator draws on ICE's unique investigative and enforcement authorities to safeguard children from foreign national pedophiles, human traffickers, international sex tourists, and other predatory criminals.

Coordinated nationally and internationally through ICE's headquarters, Operation Predator brings together an array of ICE disciplines and resources to target these child sexual abusers. As part of the effort:

- ICE established a single web portal to access all publicly available state Megan's Law databases.
- ICE created a National Child Victim Identification System in partnership with 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 are working with foreign governments and their foreign law enforcement counterparts to enhance coordination and cooperation on crimes that cross borders.
- ICE is working with INTERPOL to enhance foreign government intelligence on criminal child predators.

RESULTS

In the last year, ICE has arrested more than 4,100 child predators nationwide. These individuals have committed a wide range of acts of child sex exploitation.

Foreign National Child Predators

Nearly 85% of the arrests made as part of Operation Predator have been arrests of foreign national sex offenders whose crimes make them removable from the United States. To date, more than 1,500 of

¹ Carol Bellamy, UNICEF Executive Director, "Child exploitation is one of UNICEF's top five concerns for children in 2004", Jan. 1, 2004.

² D. Finkelhor. "Current Information on the Scope and Nature of Child Sexual Abuse." *The Future of Children: Sexual Abuse of Children*, 1994.

these predators have been deported. Their crimes include a Los Angeles man who repeatedly molested his own daughter and an Austrian-national soccer coach convicted of repeatedly fondling a mentally impaired minor.

International Child Sex Tourists

Working cooperatively with foreign governments through ICE's attaché offices worldwide, ICE agents made the first seven arrests under the new child sex tourism provisions of the PROTECT Act. The first of those arrested, Michael Lewis Clark, 70, was sentenced in June 2004 to 97 months in jail.

Human Smuggling & Trafficking of Children

The criminal networks engaged in human smuggling and trafficking have become more violent and more profit-driven than ever before. At the same time, some of their victims are getting younger and younger. In one case, a predator tried to purchase nine-to-eleven year old girls from Mexico. ICE agents arrested the individual when he traveled to Arizona to have sex with the girls.

Internet Child Pornography

Drawing on ICE's cyber crime investigative expertise, ICE is tackling the crimes that cross the nation's virtual borders. In one major investigation, ICE agents have arrested more than 140 individuals for trading, buying, and distributing child pornography online. Acting on ICE leads from the investigation, law enforcement officials in Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Hong Kong, Norway, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have arrested more than 900 individuals. Additionally, through the National Child Victim Identification System, more than 1,230 children have been identified in pornographic images.

PROTECTING CHILDREN WORLDWIDE

Several U.S. laws safeguard youth from sexual predators, including the Mann Act, the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Act of 1994, and the PROTECT Act of 2003. For example, 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:

- Manufacture, distribution, possession of child pornography: maximums of 30, 20 or 10 years in prison, respectively. Manufacture also carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years.
- 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

In addition, lawful immigrants and illegal aliens who are convicted of crimes in the United States are subject to removal proceedings, which may ultimately lead to their removal from the United States.

OPERATION PREDATOR PARTNERS

As part of our international awareness campaign to alert families to the potential dangers of child predators, ICE works closely with a number of agencies and organizations to educate the public. Such cooperation is crucial to the success of this initiative, since child predator investigations often cross jurisdictional boundaries and require specialized assistance to assist victims.

YOU CAN HELP: REPORT SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

Report suspicious activity to ICE by telephone or email:

1-866-DHS-2ICE or **Operation.Predator@dhs.gov**

Report suspected child sexual exploitation to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children:

1-800-843-5678 or **www.cybertipline.com**