



NEWS RELEASE

Lieutenant Ricardo Lopez
Media Relations Director

December 17, 2020

Fighting Human Trafficking

On December 14th and 15th, the San Diego County Human Trafficking Task Force conducted "Operation Home for the Holidays." This undercover operation was aimed at recovering juvenile victims of human trafficking. The two-day operation involved detectives from the San Diego County Sheriff's Department working undercover as sex buyers looking for online advertisements of suspected juveniles.



Eleven female adults and one female juvenile (16) responded to the undercover detectives and, upon arrival to the arranged location, were detained for further investigation.

As a result of the operation, Child Welfare Services and a juvenile advocate were on-site and assisted with the recovery of the juvenile. All of the detained females were offered resources. Some were willing to accept assistance. Four men were arrested for supervision of prostitution, one of which was in possession of a firearm at the time of his arrest. Another man was arrested for pimping and pandering. A woman was arrested for trafficking of a minor.



All of these cases are open and currently being investigated by the San Diego County Human Trafficking Task Force (HTTF), a cooperate effort involving:

**California Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
National City Police Department
San Diego County District Attorney's
Office
San Diego County Sheriff's Department
United States Attorney's Office, Southern District of California**

**California Highway Patrol
Homeland Security and Investigations
San Diego City Attorney's Office
San Diego County Probation Department
San Diego Police Department**

"I'm proud of the great work being done by the San Diego County Human Trafficking Task Force," said Sheriff Bill Gore. "The cooperation between the Sheriff's



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Department and our local, state and federal law enforcement partners is sending a clear message that human trafficking will not be tolerated in San Diego County."

"Prostitution is not a victimless crime. Victims are frequently held against their will, and often suffer severe forms of abuse at the hands of their traffickers," said Cardell T. Morant, Special Agent in Charge for Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) San Diego. "It is our responsibility, along with our other partners on the Human Trafficking Task Force, to unravel these trafficking networks and prosecute those responsible."

"No matter their circumstances, everyone deserves a safe place — holidays and every day," said California Attorney General Xavier Becerra. "I applaud our local, state, and federal partners for their commitment to make that a reality through Operation Home for the Holidays. And, at the California Department of Justice, we'll remain vigilant and do our part to help combat the threat of human trafficking in our state. When we all work together, we can make a real difference in people's lives."

"Sadly, when it comes to the sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children, there's never a shortage of work for our special agents and partners. The FBI will continue this important work with our local partners," said Special Agent in Charge Suzanne Turner, Federal Bureau of Investigation - San Diego Field Office. "Keeping our children safe will always be a top priority for the FBI."

"Every child and every human being deserve to live free of sexual exploitation and dehumanization," District Attorney Summer Stephan said. "Our specialized human trafficking team joins the Sheriff's Department and the Human Trafficking Task Force to hold perpetrators accountable through the power of the law, while at the same time providing compassionate advocacy to the most vulnerable."

If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking, call the confidential National Human Trafficking Hotline at (888) 373-7888 or text 233733. Visit <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/> for more resources.



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