

## [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#)

### News Releases

September 28, 2010 

## **ICE and 16 law enforcement leaders announce new North Texas Trafficking Task Force**

DALLAS - The local U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) - and leaders from 16 other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies - announced on Tuesday the new North Texas Trafficking Task Force (NTTTF).

The new collocated Task Force is designed to bring together the expertise, training, experience and law enforcement authorities of the partnered agencies to help identify human traffickers, and prosecute them while also protecting and aiding their victims.

In addition to ICE HSI, the following law enforcement agencies are members of this new Task Force: six Texas police departments from Dallas, Fort Worth, Arlington, Irving, Plano and Garland; the Special Investigations Division of Child Protective Services, the Texas Attorney General's Office; District Attorneys' offices from Dallas and Tarrant counties, the Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission, the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the U.S. Attorneys' Offices for the Northern and Eastern Districts of Texas. In addition, the following non-governmental organizations also work closely with the new Task Force: Mosaic, Safe Haven, Genesis Women's Shelter, and Catholic Charities.

"Our new collocated human trafficking task force allows our many members to collaborate most effectively to carry out our investigations," said John Chakwin, special agent in charge of ICE HSI in Dallas. "There's no substitute for this face-to-face interaction while investigating secretive human traffickers, and aiding their traumatized victims." Chakwin oversees 128 counties in north Texas and the State of Oklahoma.

According to the U.S. Department of State, thousands of men, women and children are trafficked to the United States from all areas of the world for sexual and labor exploitation. Many of these victims are lured from their homes with false promises of well-paying jobs. Instead, they are forced or coerced into prostitution, domestic servitude, farm or factory labor, or other types of forced labor.

Victims often find themselves in a foreign country and cannot speak the language. Traffickers often take away the victims' travel and identity documents, telling them that if they attempt to escape, the victims or their families back home will be harmed, or the victims' families will assume their smuggling debt. The partners in this new North Texas Trafficking Task Force work together to identify and rescue the victims, and investigate and prosecute these traffickers.

In addition to these local law enforcement task forces, ICE is also reaching out directly to the American public and soliciting their help in the agency's latest initiative in combating the crime of human trafficking.

As part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) "Blue Campaign" launched in July, ICE has continued its efforts to educate the public about the plight of human trafficking victims. ICE has designed and placed an anti-trafficking message in foreign language newspapers across the United States. These advertisements highlight some of the indicators of human trafficking and encourage the public to report suspected instances of trafficking.

"ICE asks that the public remain alert to potential victims. We recognize how powerful the media and advocates of all kind can be in helping us rescue these individuals," said ICE Director John Morton. "Through the 'Blue Campaign's' focus on prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership, we will work together to bring these human rights abuses to justice."

The cornerstone of the DHS Blue Campaign is to identify potential human trafficking victims, empower them to seek help, provide information and referrals, rescue them from their traffickers and connect them to services and support that are available to them. ICE is making every effort to prevent human trafficking in the United States by prosecuting the traffickers, and rescuing and protecting the victims. The greatest challenge facing law enforcement in the fight against human trafficking is victim identification. Therefore, it is key that the public be educated about trafficking to recognize and report the potential victims that live and work among us.

If anyone knows or suspects someone is being held against their will, ICE strongly urges them to contact the ICE tip line anonymously at 1-866-DHS-2-ICE. The public may also call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center's toll-free hotline at 1-888-373-7888.

For the most up-to-date ICE information, [sign up \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://service.govdelivery.com/service/multi\\_subscribe.html?code=USDHSICE\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://service.govdelivery.com/service/multi_subscribe.html?code=USDHSICE) for ICE e-mail alerts. You may also visit us on [Twitter \(http://www.twitter.com/wwwicegov\)](http://www.twitter.com/wwwicegov) and [YouTube \(http://www.youtube.com/wwwicegov\)](http://www.youtube.com/wwwicegov).

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<p>U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.</p>
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