

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

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FACT SHEET

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**DHS Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking**

Combating human trafficking is a top priority for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Human trafficking generally involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain labor or a commercial sex act. According to the International Labour Organization, 27.6 million men, women, and children are trafficked worldwide – including here in the United States.

DHS is a federal leader in this fight and works with partners at every level to prevent trafficking crimes, identify and protect victims, and bring perpetrators to justice.

The DHS Center for Countering Human Trafficking (CCHT) integrates the efforts of 16 agencies and offices within DHS that carry out our anti-trafficking mission. These efforts range from criminal investigations, victim assistance, and combating forced labor in exports destined for the United States, to intelligence, training, and external outreach. Under the leadership of Secretary Mayorkas, DHS is incorporating a victim-centered approach into every facet of the counter-human trafficking mission.

**DHS Fiscal Year 2022 Counter-Human Trafficking Highlights:**

- In January 2022, Secretary Mayorkas designated the DHS Chief Procurement Officer as the Senior Accountable Official, responsible for preventing human trafficking in DHS acquisitions and contracts by ensuring effective implementation of anti-trafficking rules and promising practices. Designation of the SAO was one of the top priorities in the President's [National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking](#).
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) issued six [Withhold Release Orders](#) (WROs) and two forced labor Findings to prevent the importation of merchandise produced with forced labor abroad. CBP also collaborated with industry and workers' rights organizations to modify and lift a WRO against garment manufacturer Natchi Private Apparel Limited (Natchi) after the company addressed all five of the indicators of forced labor identified in the WRO. Workers signed a collective bargaining agreement with the company, making this a highly successful collaboration between CBP, a foreign entity, and workers' rights stakeholders.

- In June 2022, just six months after Congress enacted the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), CBP began enforcing the new law. The UFLPA established a rebuttable presumption that goods mined, produced, or manufactured wholly or in part in the People's Republic of China Xinjiang region, as well as goods produced by certain entities identified on the [UFLPA Entity List](#), are prohibited from entering the United States due to the use of forced labor.
- DHS, as chair of the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force (FLETF), led interagency efforts to develop the [Strategy to Prevent the Importation of Goods Mined, Produced, or Manufactured with Forced Labor in the People's Republic of China](#). As required by the UFLPA, the Strategy includes a comprehensive assessment of the risk of importing goods produced with forced labor in the PRC and guidance for importers, among other components.
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) made 3,655 human trafficking arrests (an increase of more than 50% over FY 2021) and provided support to 765 victims. HSI human trafficking investigations led to 638 convictions of perpetrators (an increase of more than 80% over FY 2021).
- The CCHT approved 334 requests for [Continued Presence](#) in FY 2022.
- In FY 2022, ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) made the Blue Campaign's ICE Human Trafficking Awareness training mandatory for all ERO staff. Together, ERO and the Blue Campaign produced a human trafficking awareness video to be played in ERO facilities to educate noncitizens on the indicators of human trafficking and how to report them.
- [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services \(USCIS\)](#) granted T nonimmigrant status to 1,714 victims of trafficking in FY 2022, an increase of over 106% from FY 2021. USCIS reached the cap of 10,000 grants of U nonimmigrant status to victims of qualifying crimes in FY 2022.
- [The Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers \(FLETC\)](#) trained more than 3,300 law enforcement officers on the indicators of human trafficking, how to respond, and how to support victims.
- The [DHS Blue Campaign](#), the Department's national human trafficking public awareness initiative, provided 117 human trafficking awareness presentations to more than 150,000 federal government, NGO, law enforcement, congressional, and public attendees on how to recognize the indicators of human trafficking and properly respond to potential trafficking cases.

The Blue Campaign also developed outreach materials including a Human Trafficking Awareness Information Sheet for Code Enforcement Officers, a Human Trafficking Response Guide for School Resource Officers, and a four-part animated video series for youth.

- The [Blue Lightning Initiative \(BLI\)](#), an element of Blue Campaign led by CBP and the Department of Transportation (DOT), added 29 new partners and trained 214,277 personnel through BLI partnerships.

## **How DHS Counters Human Trafficking:**

### **Victim Protection and Assistance**

- CCHT processes applications for [Continued Presence](#) - a temporary immigration designation provided to noncitizens identified by law enforcement as trafficking victims who may be potential witnesses or who filed a civil action under 18 U.S.C. § 1595.
- USCIS adjudicates applications for victim-based immigration benefits including T visas, U visas, VAWA Self-Petitions, and Special Immigrant Juvenile Protection.
- The ICE [HSI Victim Assistance Program](#) informs victims of their rights and connects victims with organizations that provide services to support victims and their families. This support provides stability which enables victims to pursue justice by actively participating in the investigation and prosecution of the crimes committed against them.

### **Investigations and Enforcement**

- ICE HSI [investigates sex trafficking and forced labor](#), including forced labor in U.S. supply chains, arrests perpetrators, and supports prosecutions.
- ICE ERO removes convicted human traffickers from the United States.
- The DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) develops and deploys [leading-edge tools and technology](#) to help identify victims and bring perpetrators to justice.
- [CBP](#) investigates allegations of [forced labor](#) in the U.S. supply chain and detains or seizes goods when information indicates that they are subject to the UFLPA and/or produced with forced labor.
- U.S. Coast Guard conducts enforcement operations to counter human trafficking at sea. The Coast Guard also collaborates with interagency and international partners to promote the identification and protection of victims and address all forms of labor exploitation on vessels.
- DHS leads the interagency [Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force \(FLETF\)](#), which monitors U.S. enforcement of the prohibition on importing goods produced with forced labor.

### **Identification and Screening**

- DHS employees are trained to screen for suspected human trafficking victims and perpetrators on land, at sea, or in the air through CBP, USCIS, ICE, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Secret Service (USSS), and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

### **Public Engagement, Awareness, Training and Outreach**

- The [Blue Campaign](#) educates the public, non-governmental organizations, and industry and law enforcement partners about human trafficking and how to report suspected cases of trafficking. The Blue Campaign also provides training, as well as outreach materials in 39 languages, to increase the detection and reporting of human trafficking and to identify victims.

- FEMA, through the [DHS Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships](#), supports the development of anti-trafficking awareness materials and provides informational outreach to faith and community partners for the Blue Campaign.
- FLETC trains federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and international law enforcement so they have the tools and expertise to recognize and respond to human trafficking.
- As part of the Blue Campaign, DHS, through CBP, partners with the Department of Transportation to lead the [Blue Lightning Initiative \(BLI\)](#). This initiative trains aviation industry personnel to identify potential traffickers and human trafficking victims, and to report their suspicions to federal law enforcement.
- [USSS](#) provides educational training on preventing and responding to child sex trafficking to schools, parents, and other community partners as part of its Childhood Smart Program.
- The CCHT [offers quarterly Continued Presence webinars for law enforcement and biannual public webinars](#).
- USCIS offers [webinars](#) on T visas and U visas and other victim-based immigration benefits.

## **Case Spotlights**

### **HSI New York Investigation Results in 30 Year Sentence for American Singer, Songwriter**

Singer, songwriter, and record producer Robert Sylvester Kelly (R. Kelly) was investigated by HSI and [convicted of sex trafficking](#) women and children as part of an enterprise that operated for more than two decades in New York, Illinois, Connecticut and California. Kelly was found guilty on nine counts, including sexual exploitation of children, forced labor, and Mann Act violations. In June 2022, he was [sentenced to 30 years in prison](#).

### **HSI Savannah Successfully Investigates Major Labor Trafficking Organization with Assistance from CCHT**

HSI, with assistance from the CCHT, successfully investigated a major labor trafficking organization exploiting the H2A temporary agricultural worker program. Under [Operation Blooming Onion](#), HSI executed 26 search warrants leading to 29 criminal arrests, 14 seized vehicles, 185 victims identified and assisted, and approximately \$749,416 in seized currency. Three defendants were convicted and sentenced for federal labor trafficking violations, with more than 20 additional defendants indicted.

## **What You Can Do**

- Report suspected human trafficking to DHS law enforcement by calling the HSI Tip Line at 1-866-347-2423.

- Visit the [DHS Center for Countering Human Trafficking](#) website to learn more about our Department-wide efforts to combat human trafficking.
- Get help from the National Human Trafficking Hotline by calling 1-888-373-7888 or texting HELP or INFO to 233733 (BEFREE).
- Follow [DHS Blue Campaign](#) on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter: @DHSBlueCampaign.
- If you have information on goods produced with forced labor destined for the United States, provide it to [CBP and HSI](#).
- Read the [DHS Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking, the Importation of Goods Produced with Forced Labor, and Child Sexual Exploitation](#).
- Raise awareness of human trafficking in your community using [DHS Blue Campaign resources](#).
- Read the [White House National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking](#).