



Quarterly CTIP Newsletter

Agency Highlights

A Transformative Journey: From Reluctance to Advocacy in Combating Human Trafficking

Contributed by: Kevin R. White, Professor of Contracting, Defense Acquisition University

Upon retiring from the U.S. Air Force over 14 years ago, I transitioned to teaching contracting classes for the Defense Acquisition University (DAU). Recently, I participated in the Faculty Rotation Program with the Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) Program Office. Initially, I was reluctant, being unsure if my current role would have a significant enough overlap with their mission. We manage CTIP in various ways for government contracts, but rarely do we teach the impacts if those measures are not closely monitored. However, the experience has proven to be immensely rewarding, enlightening, and most of all, beneficial to my career both personally and professionally.

During my military career, I had many deployments overseas where I witnessed firsthand the harsh realities faced by Third Country Nationals, now referred to as Other Country Nationals. Their treatment was often cruel, and there was a general lack of concern for them. I knew this situation was wrong but didn't think there was anything that could be done about it.



One of the most significant aspects of my experience at CTIP has been witnessing the progress the DoD made in the fight against trafficking. The efforts restored my faith in our ability to effect meaningful change. During the January 2025 CTIP Task Force meeting, we heard stories of trafficking survivors, which was one of the most impactful experiences of my CTIP rotation. Learning about the various support mechanisms available to them was both heart-wrenching and motivating. It reinforced the idea that our work is not just about policy and enforcement but also about offering a lifeline to those in need.

I am taking the information gathered during this rotation and applying it to the development and enhancement of DAU's training courses and workshops designed to educate military and civilian Contracting Officers and Contracting Officer Representative (COR) personnel. We are improving and enhancing these courses detailing their roles and responsibilities, signs of trafficking, how to prevent it, and report it. We need to ensure that the CTIP clauses and provisions are in the contracts and all policies and procedures are followed by the contractors.

Continuing DAU's tradition of community support, I conducted an outreach event for Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps students. I described my current Faculty Rotation Program and introduced students to the CTIP Program, shared resources to raise awareness, and explained steps to take if they identify human trafficking.

During an episode of "Contracting Conversations," hosted by Scott Williams and Jim Valley, I provided

insights on the CTIP program, drawing from my extensive experience as an Air Force contracting officer and DAU instructor. I discussed the importance of CTIP in the acquisition field, the role of CORs, and the critical need for awareness and action against these heinous crimes. Tune in to https://media.dau.edu/media/1_92faesxd and learn more about how CORs can identify and combat trafficking in persons, and the tools available to support these efforts against modern-day slavery. Also check out the CTIP Office's acquisition resources here: <https://ctip.defense.gov/Acquisition-Resources/>.

The CTIP website, <https://ctip.defense.gov/> with its array of tools, materials, and training options, stands as a testament to the DoD's collective efforts to combat trafficking. From detailed guides and informative articles to interactive training modules, the CTIP website is a treasure trove of valuable information.

My time at CTIP provided me with a broader perspective on the global nature of human trafficking as I engaged with experts and stakeholders from various countries. My experience working with the dedicated staff at the CTIP Office began with a measure of hesitation and evolved into a passion for enacting change.

Agency Highlights

Tattoos as a Sign of Trafficking

Contributed by: Combating Trafficking in Persons Office

"I was physically, psychologically, and sexually abused by my mom and stepdad from the time I was seven until I was 14. I began running away at age 11, was put into foster care at 15, and was emancipated by the state of Ohio when I was 17. I was trafficked by a woman, and I later married a man who became romantically involved with my trafficker and partnered with her to continue my exploitation. I was so heavily under their control and manipulation that I agreed to get a bulldog (representing his gang/prison name) tattooed on my chest. When I was finally free, I got the tattoo removed, but my body still bears many of the signs of trafficking."

-A Survivor

Human trafficking is a serious problem in the United States and abroad. In addition to being a law enforcement and human rights problem, it is also a health issue. Recent research has shown that victims of human trafficking have physical and mental health problems, including acute and chronic illnesses, injuries, and impairments such as substance use disorders. A landmark study in 2014 found that 87.8% of survivors indicated that they had sought health care during the time they were trapped in the trafficking situation and that health care providers are first responders who need to be trained to know the signs and indicators of human trafficking and to know how to respond appropriately. Last year the Combating Trafficking in Persons Program Office (CTIP PMO) worked with the Defense Health Agency to create a specialized training on Health and Human Trafficking for the 140,000 health providers in DoD. The training is available on JKO and is offered with one hour of Continuing Medical Education (CME).

Some healthcare providers are now working specialized trainings on trafficking in specialty practices. Dr. Shadi Kourosh, founder of the Pro Bono Tattoo Removal Program at Massachusetts General Hospital said that initially the program focused on removing tattoos of former street gang members, but a new clientele emerged: young women and girls who had been trafficked and bore tattoos branding them as sex slaves. Doing this work she said she realized that "as the largest and most outward-facing organ in the human body, the skin often bears the earliest and most visible signs of violence and exploitation."

There are many skin signs of human trafficking, including scars from violence, rashes from infections, abscesses from intravenous drug use, bites from infestations, and tattoos are one of the more prominent, Dr.

Kourosh found that common motifs include:

- Signs of Ownership such as the trafficker’s name or initials or a gang’s symbol
- Symbols of sentiment or romance such as hearts, roses, teddy bears
- Symbols of currency or wealth such as crowns, barcodes, dollar signs

In a new article entitled, “Skin Signs of Human Trafficking and Intervention by Dermatologists,” Dr. Kourosh and her co-authors note that “human traffickers may use tattoos and other forms of branding as a means of exerting control over their victims, akin to branding livestock. Beyond their physical presence, these tattoos often serve to stigmatize and dehumanize trafficked individuals, further entrenching their exploitation and isolation.”

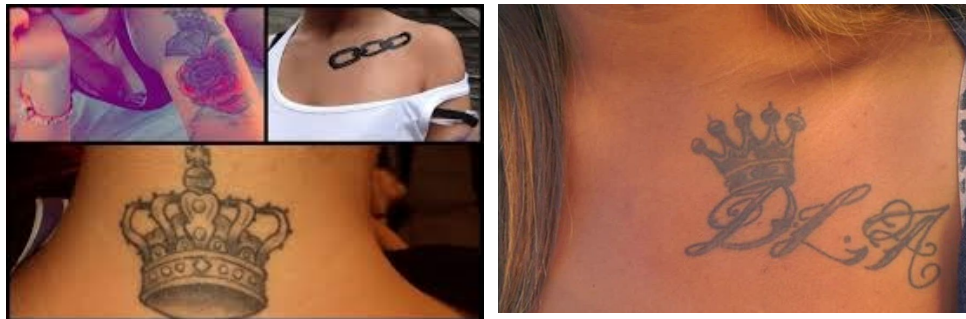
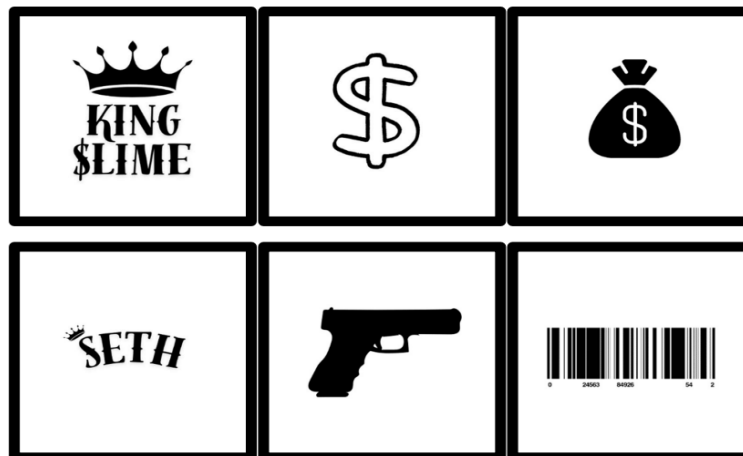


Figure 1: Examples of common tattoo motifs found on trafficked individuals.

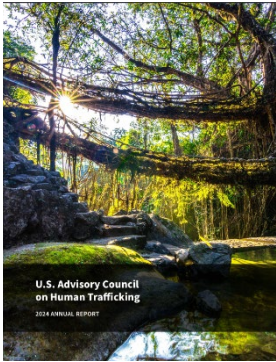


New trainings on the skin signs of human trafficking, including evidence of abuse, infectious diseases, sexually transmitted infections, substance use, and branding tattoos, can equip healthcare providers and others who may have direct contact with trafficking victims and survivors to recognize, the skin signs of human trafficking and respond appropriately. Legislators in some states are also responding: In Tennessee, two legislators introduced a bill titled, “The Ink of Hope Act,” which requires tattoo operators and tattoo artists to complete up to one hour of training on recognizing and reporting signs of human trafficking.

Quotes and survivor story taken from:

Health Issues of Those Experiencing Trafficking: Background and Context for Dermatologist
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0738081X24001974?via%3Dihub>

Skin Signs of Human Trafficking and Intervention by Dermatologists
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0738081X24001986>



Interagency Activities

The U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking released its [2024 Annual Report](#) providing recommendations to improve federal efforts to end human trafficking. The U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking comprises 13 survivor leaders who bring their expertise and experience to advise and provide recommendations to the President’s Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (PITF) to improve federal anti-trafficking policies.

DoD CTIP Program Office Updates

The CTIP Office chaired the CTIP Task Force meeting on January 8, 2025. The CTIP PMO invited two guest speakers for the meeting: Ms. Kalei Grant discussed her experience as a survivor of human trafficking in Hawaii and on the mainland, her work as part of the Hawaiian Attorney General's Office, and some of the recent work she did on the Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls Task Force Report, highlighting links or connections with the U.S. military. Special Agent Robert Arcand discussed his experience investigating cases of human trafficking, the investigative process and his view of success, obstacles and challenges investigating cases in Hawaii, issues and gaps in the work, and positive role the military plays in addressing human trafficking.



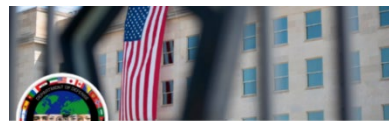
On February 4, 2025, the CTIP PMO gave a presentation for a delegation from Africa participating in the Department of State International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). The presentation focused on the DoD’s policies and program centered on combating human trafficking. The IVLPs objective for the briefing included a review of the U.S. government strategies to combat international trafficking in persons, including crimes against women and children, by examining the formulation, administration, and enforcement of U.S. policy on the national, state, and local levels.

For more information,
visit :
ctip.defense.gov

The CTIP Office is partnering with DHS for an event in the Pentagon Auditorium on April 9, 2025, featuring the DoD Student Guide to Preventing Human Trafficking and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Know2Protect and iGuardian programs. Know2Protect is a DHS national public awareness campaign to educate and empower children, teens, parents, trusted adults, and policymakers to prevent and combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA). Project iGuardian is Know2Protect’s educational program that teaches the public about the ongoing threats children and teens face from online predators and how to avoid them. *More information coming soon.*

NEW Training: The CTIP Office released the [CTIP Judge Advocate and Legal Counsel specialized training](#) and companion Toolkit for Judge Advocates in the U.S. Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy, including those responsible for administrative law, government contracting, civilian and military personnel law, the law of war and international relations, as well as those serving as prosecutors for the military when conducting courts-martial. Judge Advocates, General Counsels, and other legal professionals in the DoD play a key role in advising commanders and leadership on the threats of human trafficking and the ways to combat it.

Check out the CTIP Website! The [website](#) includes tabs for the CTIP Resources, the Survivor Voices of Human Trafficking, and Report TIP.



Follow us on social media! The CTIP PMO is now on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn!](#)



**DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE CTIP
PROGRAM OFFICE**

4800 Mark Center Dr.
Alexandria, VA 22350

Phone: (571) 372-1963
e-mail: dodctip@mail.mil

Upcoming Events

- CTIP/DHS Event in the Pentagon Auditorium on April 9, 2025