



Quarterly CTIP Newsletter

Agency Highlights

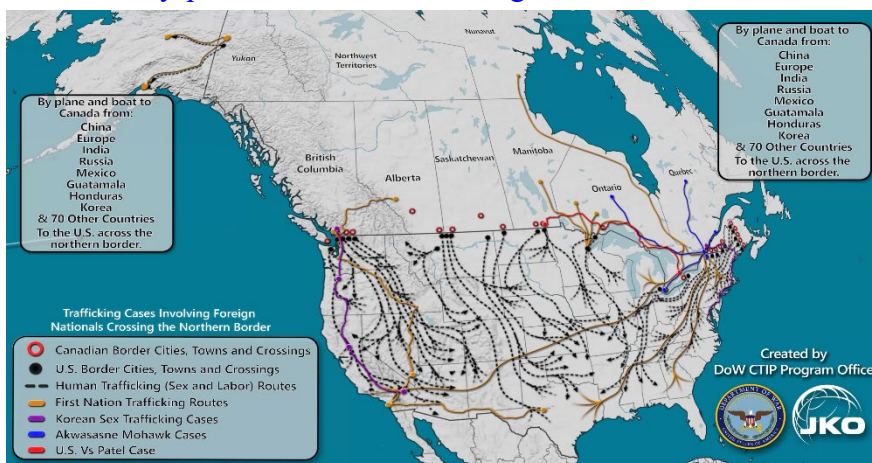
Preventing Human Trafficking by Securing Our Northern Border

Contributed by: Combating Trafficking in Persons Office

U.S. law enforcement uncovered a multi-state human trafficking ring operating throughout the northeastern U.S. from Rhode Island to Washington, D.C. Hundreds of Korean women were recruited with false promises of U.S. jobs, flown to Canada, and trafficked from Quebec into northeastern U.S. states. The women incurred tens of thousands of dollars of debt owed to the traffickers. The ring used massage parlors, health spas, and acupuncture clinics as fronts for brothels and traded/exchanged the women frequently between brothels. The traffickers used threats against the women's families, threats to turn the women over to immigration, and jail to keep them in line.¹

Since January 2025, the U.S. Department of War (DoW) has been tasked to work with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and other agencies to seal our land border and repel forms of illegal immigration, including human trafficking. In response to this call to action, the DoW Combating Trafficking in Persons Program Management Office (CTIP PMO) created a new specialized training entitled, "Seal and Repel: Border Security to Prevent Human Trafficking," which features a map of the routes and patterns of human trafficking at the southern border.² The CTIP PMO also developed a new training for the National Guard that features a map of the routes and patterns of human trafficking at the northern border the U.S. shares with Canada.³ The maps are based on Federal case law and Federal intelligence reports as a part of original research conducted by the CTIP PMO.

We see these trainings as first and foremost a prevention project. By sealing the border and repelling illegal aliens our troops are preventing foreign national human traffickers from gaining access to the U.S., and from forming and strengthening criminal networks that exploit vulnerable human beings. You may watch the training Seal and Repel trailer to better understand what is in it: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/992223/seal-and-repel-border-security-prevent-human-trafficking> and read about it in the August 2025 [CTIP Newsletter](#).



U.S. - Canada border:

- World's longest undefended international border
- 5,500 miles spanning 13 U.S. states and 8 Canadian provinces/territories
- 100 official land crossing points
- 120 designated "ports of entry" - busiest are Peace Arch and Ambassador Bridge (open 24/7)

Click [here](#) to see animated map.

¹ From the U.S. Department of Justice: <https://www.justice.gov/archive/usao/nye/pr/2006/2006Aug16.html>

² CAC holders can access the Seal and Repel training on Joint Knowledge Online (JKO) at: https://jkodirect.jten.mil/html/COI.xhtml?course_prefix=CTIP&course_number=SR-US021

³ CAC holders can access the National Guard training on JKO at: https://jkosupport.jten.mil/Atlas2/page/coi/externalCourseAccess.jsf?v=1768911077647&course_prefix=CTIP&course_number=NG-US022

In January 2022: U.S., Canadian, and Indian law enforcement agencies began investigating links to entities in Mumbai accused of illegally ferrying students across the Canada-U.S. border. A news release from India's Enforcement Directorate said a multi-city search revealed incriminating evidence of human trafficking. The investigation was launched after Jagdish Baldevbhai Patel, 39, was found dead along with his wife and two children near a border crossing between Manitoba and the U.S. in the middle of winter. The investigation found that about 35,000 Indian nationals were recruited in two years using ads in local Indian papers and online. Once recruited, they were flown to remote Canadian areas to cross the border. Homeland Security Investigations says the entities advertised costs of \$5,000 - \$20,000 for these border crossings.

New intelligence from U.S. and Canadian officials suggests that as the southern border is sealed, the northern border is becoming the new route into the U.S. Data from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection show there have been a significant and "alarming increase" in human smuggling and human trafficking along the U.S.-Canada border in recent years:

- **Record-Breaking Encounters:** In the Swanton Sector (Vermont, upstate New York, and New Hampshire), agents recorded more apprehensions in fiscal year (FY) 2023 than in the previous 11 years combined. FY 2024 numbers were on pace to more than double that record.
- **Statistical Jump:** Nationwide northern border encounters jumped from 32,376 in FY 2020 to 109,535 in FY 2022. In 2023, U.S. border agents recorded nearly 12,000 apprehensions, over three-and-a-half times more than 2022's total of about 3,600.
- **Smuggler Tactics:** Smuggling networks advertise and arrange travel via social media, charging individuals between \$1,500 and \$40,000 for illicit passage, often over dangerous terrain.
- **Origin of Migrants:** Individuals involved in smuggling operations are largely from South and Central America, China, and India. Due in part to increased enforcement and dismantled southern border routes, they fly into Canada before attempting illegal U.S. entry.

The National Guard and Seal and Repel trainings and maps will help equip U.S. active military, Reserve, and National Guard members being deployed to secure our borders and to understand how their mission contributes directly to preventing more human trafficking in the U.S. Decreasing human trafficking saves lives.

In short, the mission and mandate of the Department of War is to Seal and Repel. Seal the border to deter and prevent the entry of illegal aliens and repel those who enter or have entered illegally. The specialized trainings instruct our military members on the difference between human smuggling and human trafficking, provide a preliminary list of signs and indicators of human trafficking victims, and further provide a clear method to report suspected and confirmed human trafficking victims and incidents.



Irregular Warfare, the Warfighter, and Human Trafficking

Contributed by: Combating Trafficking in Persons Office

Human trafficking is a crime and a human rights abuse. Although rarely examined as such, it is also a national security issue. Recent Federal case law shows that human trafficking is linked to drug trafficking, arms trafficking, migrant smuggling, terrorism, narco-terrorism, blackmail, espionage, bribery, and other criminal activities that weaken our country.

In 2025, with the new U.S. designation of international cartels as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs), the link between human trafficking and terrorism became clearer. The groups designated as FTOs include MS-13, Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), Northeast Cartel, Sinaloa Cartel, Tren De Aragua, and the Gulf Cartel,

among others. These FTOs are known to use human trafficking as a means of financing their organizational activities. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has prosecuted over three dozen cases of FTOs involving these groups for trafficking young women and girls as young as 12-years-old from Mexico, Central, and South America to the U.S. Their operations are highly sophisticated, and may combine drug trafficking, arms trafficking, human trafficking, and other criminal activities to raise money and to gain control of localities, states, or even entire countries. In addition to past prosecutions, dozens of other investigations are ongoing.



A new RAND article notes that as the current Administration prioritizes combating Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs), it could shape U.S. foreign security policy in the coming years.⁴ The article gives as an example powerful cartels whose influence and control are spreading far beyond their countries of origin, “The Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco Nueva Generación Cartel, in particular, have become powerful nonstate actors beyond Latin America, establishing a presence in over 100 countries. These groups form partnerships and agreements with local criminal outfits. In some cases, they carve out “satellite narco-states,” where they tyrannize residents and move contraband, cash, and

human beings with impunity.⁵ Both of these FTOs also engage in human trafficking, including sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and child soldiering (recruiting and using minors in various roles, including as lookouts, drug traffickers, and assassins).

A case can be made that these groups are irregular adversaries, and that like terrorism, human trafficking is a tactic they use to finance their operations and to gain control of a target population, part of a country, or even an entire country. In the new DoD Instruction 3000.07, entitled, “Irregular Warfare,” irregular warfare (IW) is defined as “a form of warfare where states and non-state actors campaign to assure or coerce states or other groups through indirect, non-attributable, or asymmetric activities.”⁶ While analysis of all the unconventional tactics that FTOs use is ongoing, it is commonly agreed that FTOs utilize many of the tactics associated with non-state and state actors with less conventional military power – ambush, sabotage, use of violence and coercion, covert action, as well as criminal activities including murder, extortion, robbery, kidnapping, drug trafficking, money laundering, weapons trafficking, witness tampering, and human trafficking. They use these to establish control, wield power, and generate revenue.

One reason to examine the links between FTO human trafficking and other kinds of trafficking is the operational overlap. FTOs often use the same routes, actors, and methods to move people, drugs, and weapons. For example, firearms are used to protect drug smuggling operations, secure trafficking routes, and exert control. In one case, *State of Utah v. Rax*, sex trafficking and drug trafficking were inextricably linked. In this case, a father noticed his son acting oddly and suspected sexual exploitation by an adult male. He contacted his state Attorney General (AG) Office. The young teen told the AG about a powerful shot-caller in MS-13 who was raping young boys, selling them for sex, and forcing them to be mules for his drug trafficking network. The investigation led to the discovery of 250 victims, some as young as nine years old when they were first abused. Victims said they were recruited with money, candy, and trips to the local video arcade and then forced into trafficking with threats of harm to family. This was one of the largest U.S. human trafficking cases.

Several Federal cases included weapons charges as well as human trafficking. In one case in Alaska, a trafficker who used girls as young as 13-years-old also trafficked weapons and had ties to U.S. street gangs as well as international criminal networks (*U.S. v. Sabil Mumin Mujahid*). Gang members and associates involved in sex trafficking operations also have been found to be involved in other violent criminal enterprises, which

⁴ RAND Corporation, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2025/04/targeting-cartels-as-terrorists-puts-new-tools-in-play.html>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ DODI 3000.07, “Irregular Warfare,” September 29, 2025

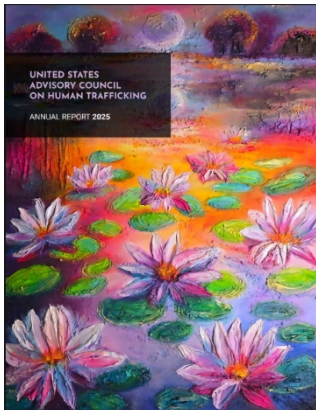
<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/300007p.PDF?ver=IRJ36mSworhF2PKZnXE-zA%3D%3D>

inherently include the use and movement of illicit firearms. To date, DOJ has prosecuted almost two hundred cases of domestic and foreign national street gangs, prison gangs, and outlaw motorcycle gangs for sex trafficking.

As our soldiers are deployed to the southern border, or called to assist in emergency crime control efforts, or used as a force multiplier in new kinds of combat with narco-terrorists and other irregular adversaries, they need specialized training preparing them for irregular warfare, irregular adversaries/tactics, and the ways in which various forms of trafficking, including human trafficking, are national security threats. This training should be broad and deep to prepare military personnel for adversaries using asymmetric tactics and the threat these dangerous groups are becoming to the security and stability of countries around the world.



Interagency Activities



The Department of State released the [2025 Trafficking in Persons \(TIP\) Report](#). The TIP Report is the U.S. Government's principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking. It is also the world's most comprehensive resource of governmental anti-trafficking efforts and reflects the U.S. Government's commitment to global leadership on this key human rights and law enforcement issue.

The U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking released its [2025 Annual Report](#) providing recommendations to improve federal efforts to end human trafficking. The Advisory Council 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.

On January 6, 2026, President Donald J. Trump released a [Message on National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month](#).

DoD CTIP Program Office Updates

The CTIP Office chaired the CTIP Task Force meeting on January 14, 2025, which had 92 attendees. The CTIP Office invited the following guest speakers for the meeting: Dr. Marisa Ugarte, Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition (BSCC) Executive Director, discussed the problem of human trafficking, particularly at the southern border of the U.S., giving examples of cases, and talking about the work she has been doing at the BSCC for twenty years helping to prevent trafficking and to protect and assist victims of trafficking. Dr. Ugarte also shared her views and vision for what needs to happen to stop human trafficking in the U.S. Ms. Laura Lederer, CTIP SME, discussed the new CTIP Seal and Repel: Border Security to Prevent Human Trafficking training.



The CTIP Office participated in the Senior Policy Operating Group (SPOG) meeting on December 4, 2025. The CTIP Program Director represented DoW. The CTIP Office submitted updates on DoW's recent CTIP activities including training updates, CTIP speaking engagements and the July 30, 2026 event, and the new Seal and Repel Training PSA. The SPOG consists of senior officials designated as representatives of the President's Interagency Task Force.

For more information,
visit :
ctip.defense.gov

NEW PSA: The CTIP Office released the [Seal and Repel: Border Security to Prevent Human Trafficking](#) PSA, describing the new specialized training. The PSA is running on Armed Forces Network.

Check out the CTIP Website! The [website](#) includes tabs for CTIP Trainings, CTIP Resources, and Reporting TIP.



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

Upcoming Events

- CTIP Task Force Meeting, April 8, 2026