



Quarterly CTIP Newsletter

Agency Highlights

Dangers in the Digital Playground: Keeping Children Safe Online

Contributed by: Combating Trafficking in Persons Office

April is the Month of the Military Child and National Child Abuse Prevention Month. It's an opportunity to honor and protect not only our military connected children, but all youths throughout the nation. With the rise of online exploitation cases targeting children and teens, the Department of Defense (DoD) Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) Office continues to raise awareness about this growing threat by educating DoD personnel, parents, and their dependents.



Sextortion: A form of child sexual exploitation where children are threatened or blackmailed, most often with the possibility of sharing with the public sexual images of them, by a person who demands additional sexual content, sexual activity or money from the child.

According to [the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children \(NCMEC\)](#), sextortion cases have dramatically increased, with millions of reports of online enticement and child exploitation flooding in each year. Reports of online child sexual exploitation rose from 2.1 million in 2020 to an alarming 36 million in 2023, a nearly twentyfold increase in just three years.

On April 9, 2025, the CTIP Office invited the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to speak at the quarterly DoD CTIP Task Force meeting to share tools and strategies to combat online child sexual exploitation. Special Agent (SA) Benjamin Miller, Department of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), who serves on the Human Exploitation Group and specializes in human trafficking, child exploitation, and victim services, provided an in-depth overview on the DHS [Know2Protect®](#) Campaign and [Project iGuardian®](#).

PROJECT
iGUARDIAN®



The Know2protect Campaign is a national public awareness effort aimed at equipping children, teens, parents, trusted adults, and policymakers with tools to prevent and combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA). Project iGuardian is the in-person education component of the campaign delivered in schools, community centers, and at parent conferences. It focuses on internet safety and the risks associated with online interactions.

There are three versions of Project iGuardian: one for tweens in grades 5-6, one for teens in grades 7-12 and one for parents and trusted adults. For younger children, topics include discussion of pop-up passwords, looking at inappropriate content, not trusting people you meet online, and what SA Miller calls "Netiquette." For older students, topics expand to sexting, online predators, posting personal and inappropriate information and photos, and cyberbullying.

During the CTIP Task Force meeting, SA Miller presented the parent-focused version of the Know2Protect program, which covers:

- Knowing the Threats
- Understanding How Exploitation Happens
- Examining Personal Information and Data Permanency
- Looking at Sexting and Sextortion
- Knowing What to do if it Happens to Your Child

“Technology is the new playground,” SA Miller emphasized, warning that it takes as little as 19 seconds for a child’s interaction with a stranger online to become dangerous. He provided an example of a recent arrest and conviction of one of the biggest child abuse rings on the dark web, called Child’s Play. The ring’s server was located in Australia, but its ringleader lived in Canada and a co-predator lived in the U.S. They were both arrested in Texas after a cooperative effort between journalists, law enforcement officials and others. SA Miller noted that these online predators are well organized and operate through a “Pedo-Support Community” to help other predators post, exploit, and avoid law enforcement.

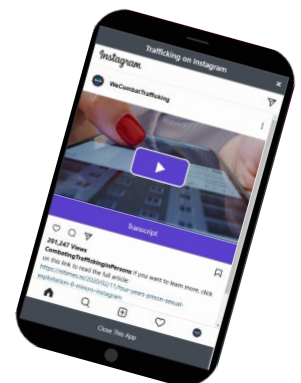
SA Miller explained how predators use a wide range of platforms including social media, online games, video hosting sites, and virtual reality spaces to groom and exploit minors. He identified popular apps parents should be aware of, such as Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, Yubo (formerly Yellow), Kik Messenger, Threads, WhatsApp, Omegle, Tinder, and Telegram where predators often operate. While some platforms like Snapchat claim to delete content quickly or automatically, predators can easily capture and misuse content by using secondary devices to take pictures and videos. Gaming platforms like Discord and Twitch were also highlighted as emerging spaces where groomers seek to connect with children.

SA Miller discussed three levels of the web and percentage of predator activity on each:

- Surface Web – surface web is what we see when we get on and Google something (4%)
- Deep Web – is password protected, seemingly safe, but where a lot of predators (90%) are active
- Dark web – like Silk Road – is a place where everything illegal could be bought and sold (6%).

He encouraged parents to familiarize themselves with resources to protect their kids including Family Online Safety Institute, The Carly Ryan Foundation, Common-Sense Media, and the Know2Protect Campaign, and noted that the best protection is proactive communication with your children about the way exploitation happens and how to avoid it. If you’re interested in hosting a Project iGuardian Parents, Tweens, or Teens presentation for your organization or community, email Know2Protect at iguardsian.hq@ice.dhs.gov.

As part of our continued commitment to protect children from trafficking and exploitation, the DoD CTIP Office developed the [CTIP Student Guide to Preventing Human Trafficking](#), a free interactive online resource designed for military-connected students, 10th-12th grade. The Student Guide educates teens on the realities of human trafficking, particularly in school settings and online where exploitation is taking place. The Guide includes videos, quizzes, and other interactive features to help teens recognize the warning signs, set boundaries, and seek help when needed. There is a companion Parent Resource Guide, which explains the importance of educating students about human trafficking and walks parents through the course topics. The CTIP Office remains committed to preventing exploitation and ensuring the safety of our military children year-round.



Agency Highlights

New Training - “Secure and Repel: Combating Human Trafficking by Securing the U.S. Southern

Border”

Contributed by: Combating Trafficking in Persons Office

In a series of Executive Orders, Proclamations, and National Security Presidential Memoranda, President Trump declared a national emergency at the U.S. Southern Border and tasked the U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) with the mission to seal the border and repel forms of invasion, including human trafficking.

To combat human trafficking and other criminal activities involving aliens that U.S. military personnel may encounter at the southern border, the Combating Trafficking in Persons Program Management Office developed a new specialized micro-training, “Secure and Repel: Combating Human Trafficking by Securing the U.S. Southern Border.” Partnering with USNORTHCOM, and sister agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services, the training focuses on deterrence of human trafficking at the border. Those Service members deploying to the border may take this targeted course in lieu of the General Awareness Refresher training.¹

Executive Actions

- [Proclamation 10886](#), “Declaring a National Emergency at the Southern Border of the United States”
- [Executive Order 14157](#), “Designating Cartels and Other Organizations as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Specially Designated Global Terrorists”
- [Executive Order 13773](#), “Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking”
- [Executive Order 14165](#), “Securing our Borders”
- [Executive Order 14167](#), “Clarifying the Military’s Role in Protecting the Territorial Integrity of the United States”
- [National Security Presidential Memorandum/NSPM-4](#), “Military Mission for Sealing the Southern Border of the United States and Repelling Invasions”

In addition to trafficking contraband such as drugs and arms into the U.S., criminal aliens have trafficked human beings into the U.S. to compel them into commercial sex (sex trafficking) and forced labor (labor trafficking). To date thousands of federal, state, and local cases of human trafficking have been prosecuted.

A single human trafficking ring can have dozens of traffickers, and sometimes hundreds of victims. High-profile criminal cartels have often been in operation for years before being apprehended, tried, and convicted. Unlike drug and arms trafficking, where the contraband is seized, tagged, and held as evidence on a shelf, in human trafficking there is a human being who has been sold and resold, day after day, week after week, year after year. Many victims are physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually devastated by the time they are rescued from criminal alien traffickers.

Given access by land, sea, and air, almost any city or town can be a border entry in the 21st century. However, by far the most active entryways, from heat maps and other forms of high-tech surveillance, as well as from human intelligence, are the southern land borders of the U.S. The Mexico–United States land border extends 1,954 miles. In addition, the maritime boundaries extend 18 miles into the Pacific Ocean and 12 miles into the Gulf of America. It is the tenth-longest border between two countries in the world.

Our southern border with Mexico is particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. Examination of case law over the past 20 years shows that traffickers have smuggled men, women, and children into the U.S. and compelled them into commercial sex and forced labor in the following ways:

1. By land – over southern border wall
2. By land – by foot, car, truck – official crossings
3. By land – by foot, car, truck – illegal crossings

¹ In 2022, Public Law 117-348, Section 122, mandated biennial CTIP refresher training for all U.S. Government personnel. DoD personnel may take any of the specialized CTIP trainings, including this new training, in lieu of the CTIP Refresher training. See <https://ctip.defense.gov/Training/> for a list of DoD CTIP trainings.

4. By air - small private aircraft, cargo planes, commercial aircraft
5. Underground – through 200-plus tunnels from Mexico to U.S.
6. Across Rio Grande – wading, swimming, floating, boarding
7. By sea – Mexico to San Diego or further up coast
8. By freight train – six freight routes go across the border at Calexico, California; Nogales, Arizona; and Brownsville, Eagle Pass, El Paso, and Laredo, Texas

The CTIP Office is honored to partner with the personnel in U.S. NORTHCOM on the development of this micro-training to assist our forces on the border to focus on their core mission of sealing the border and repelling invasion, including from human traffickers.

DoD CTIP Program Office Updates

The CTIP Office chaired the CTIP Task Force meeting on April 9, 2025. The CTIP PMO invited two guest speakers for the meeting: Dr. Nissi Hamilton discussed her experience as a survivor who was trafficked as a child and joined the military to escape her trafficking situation. Special Agent Benjamin Miller, Department of Homeland (DHS) Security, discussed DHS Campaign initiatives, Know2Protect and iGuardian, to bring a spotlight to the rising problem of online child exploitation.



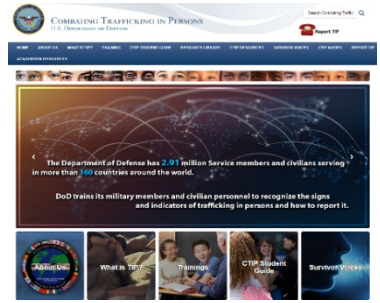
The CTIP PMO scrubbed and made updates to all CTIP trainings, social media, and CTIP website for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) terms per Executive Order 14168, “Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government.” JKO uploaded all the updated trainings/standalones into the JKO Learning Management System. The files were also uploaded into the cloud portal for LMS POCs to retrieve them.

For more information,
visit :
ctip.defense.gov

NEW Training: *The CTIP Office developed and released the [Military Recruiters Micro-Training](#). Military recruiters bring in approximately 150,000 new recruits each year, and they interview hundreds of thousands more, many of them from communities we know are vulnerable to human trafficking. The micro-training will help explain the nature and scope of human trafficking, the signs and indicators of sex and labor trafficking as they might occur in a recruiter setting, and appropriate responses, within the parameters of their work, if they suspect or confirm human trafficking.*

Updated Resource: *The CTIP Office updated and released the [CTIP Leadership Resource](#). The resource assists leaders in carrying out their responsibilities as outlined in the Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 2200.01, "Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP)." The Resource will provide Commanders with the tools to combat human trafficking in the DoD, a brief overview on what constitutes human trafficking, authorities governing human trafficking (laws, policies, and regulations), resources and trainings available to leadership, and reporting procedures for human trafficking.*

Check out the CTIP Website! The [website](#) includes tabs for CTIP Trainings, the Student Guide, 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, July 9, 2025
- United Nations World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, July 30, 2025