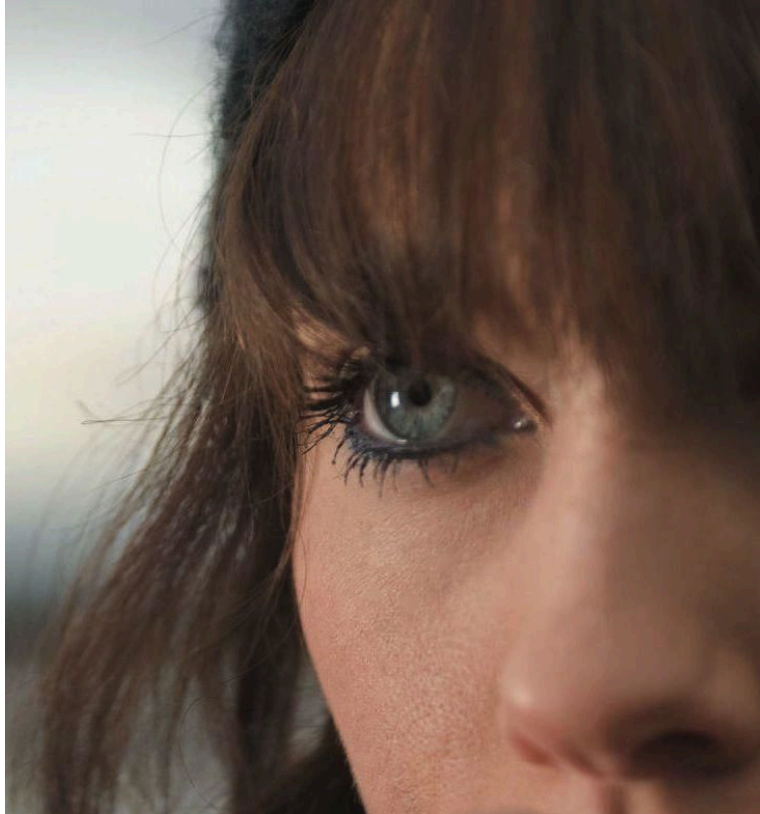

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day

January 11, 2023



Today, federal law enforcement partners from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon, FBI Portland Field Office, and Homeland Security Investigations Seattle Field Office join to commemorate National Human Trafficking Awareness Day and reaffirm their commitment to combating all forms of human trafficking.

"Human trafficking devastates families and communities and preys on the most vulnerable members of our society. As a federal prosecutor, I've seen the extraordinary suffering survivors have endured and the incredible strength, courage, and resolve they demonstrate as they rebuild their lives. Today is a day we honor these survivors," said Natalie Wight, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

"Due to the I-5 corridor, human trafficking remains a huge problem throughout the state of Oregon and sadly, our Violent Crime Squad and Child Exploitation Task Force have some of the busiest investigators in the FBI's Portland office. Traffickers often lure vulnerable victims with promises of a better life and then use violence and manipulation as a means to control," said, Kieran L. Ramsey, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Portland Field Office. "The FBI, along with our law enforcement partners, is working every day to

protect those victims who are being exploited from further abuse. Help us help them. If you have information about human trafficking or child exploitation, please contact law enforcement immediately.”

“Our nation is one that places a high value on opportunity, and through our many partnerships we can ensure that those opportunities are not poisoned by criminals who utilize slavery as cruel means to a harmful end,” said Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Robert Hammer, who oversees HSI operations in the Pacific Northwest. “HSI continues to fight human trafficking regardless of the form it takes, and will use our expertise in investigating transnational crime to prevent the exploitation of people through forced labor, domestic servitude, or sex trafficking.”

Human trafficking, sometimes referred to as trafficking in persons or modern slavery, is a serious federal crime involving the exploitation of individuals for labor, services, or commercial sex through force, fraud, or coercion. This coercion can be subtle or overt, physical or psychological. Exploitation of a minor for commercial sex is human trafficking, regardless of whether any form of force, fraud, or coercion was used.

Victims of human trafficking can be anyone regardless of race, color, national origin, disability, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, education level, or citizenship status. Although there is no defining characteristic that all human trafficking victims share, traffickers around the world frequently prey on individuals who are poor, vulnerable, living in unsafe or unstable environments, or are in search of a better life.

In the U.S., trafficking victims can be American or foreign citizens. Some of the most vulnerable populations for trafficking in the U.S. include American Indian and Alaska Native communities, LGBTQ individuals, individuals with disabilities, undocumented migrants, runaway and homeless youth, temporary guest-workers, and low-income individuals.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Oregon is committed to continuing its victim-centered, trauma-informed approach to detecting hidden human trafficking crimes, holding perpetrators accountable, and helping to restore the lives of survivors, while strengthening strategic anti-trafficking partnerships.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, please call 911.

If you believe you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking or may have information about a trafficking situation, please call the National Human Trafficking Hotline toll-free at 1-888-373-7888 or visit <https://humantraffickinghotline.org>. You can also text the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 233733.

January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Every year since 2010, the President has dedicated the month to raising awareness about the different forms of human trafficking and educating people about this crime and how to spot it. To learn more visit,

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2022/12/30/a-proclamation-on-national-human-trafficking-prevention-month-2023/>.

