

DHS uncovers 311 child victims of sexual exploitation in 'cold cases'

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Department of Homeland Security investigators, in collaboration with over a dozen international agencies, have identified 311 probable victims in "cold cases" of sexual exploitation.

Under "[Operation Renewed Hope](#)," led by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), which started on Jul. 17, investigators meticulously examined explicit online content featuring minors.

This content, which included numerous images and videos of abuse, was primarily located on the dark web and spanned several decades. Despite its age, the content played a crucial role in identifying the affected children, perpetrators, and locations where instances of abuse were either ongoing or had taken place, the DHS said.

"These crimes, and the criminals who commit them, are pernicious, repugnant and a scourge on the global communities we serve and seek to protect," HSI Executive Associate Director Katrina W. Berger said in a statement. "Our HSI workforce is deeply committed to identifying, locating and rescuing victims being abused and apprehending those who prey on the vulnerable. On this we cannot be more clear: If you are abusing or exploiting children, we will leverage every authority, partnership and resource at our disposal to bring you to justice."

The operation shared over 100 leads with HSI field offices and 25 allied nations, and officials say that several suspects in Canada and the U.S. have already been arrested.

According to the DHS, during the fiscal year 2022, the efforts of the Cyber Crimes Center and HSI field offices led to the "identification and/or rescue" of 1,170 child victims, along with the arrest of 4,459 individuals involved in crimes related to the sexual exploitation of minors.

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