

More Than 2,300 Suspected Online Child Sex Offenders Arrested During Operation “Broken Heart”

The Department of Justice today announced the arrest of more than 2,300 suspected online child sex offenders during a three-month, nationwide operation conducted by Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task forces. The task forces identified 195 offenders who either produced child pornography or committed child sexual abuse, and 383 children who suffered recent, ongoing, or historical sexual abuse or production of child pornography.

The 61 ICAC task forces, located in all 50 states and comprised of more than 4,500 federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies, led the coordinated operation known as “Broken Heart” during the months of March, April, and May 2018. During the course of the operation, the task forces investigated more than 25,200 complaints of technology-facilitated crimes against children and delivered more than 3,700 presentations on Internet safety to over 390,000 youth and adults.

“No child should ever have to endure sexual abuse,” Attorney General Jeff Sessions said. “And yet, in recent years, certain forms of modern technology have facilitated the spread of child pornography and created greater incentives for its production. We at the Department of Justice are determined to strike back against these repugnant crimes. It is shocking and very sad that in this one operation, we have arrested more than 2,300 alleged child predators and investigated some 25,200 sexual abuse complaints. Any would-be criminal should be warned: this Department will remain relentless in hunting

down those who victimize our children.”

The operation targeted suspects who: (1) produce, distribute, receive and possess child pornography; (2) engage in online enticement of children for sexual purposes; (3) engage in the sex trafficking of children; and (4) travel across state lines or to foreign countries and sexually abuse children.

The ICAC Program is funded through the Department’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). In 1998, OJJDP launched the ICAC Task Force Program to help federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies enhance their investigative responses to offenders who use the Internet, online communication systems or computer technology to exploit children. To date, ICAC Task Forces have reviewed more than 775,000 complaints of child exploitation, which resulted in the arrest of more than 83,000 individuals. In addition, since the ICAC program’s inception, more than 629,400 law enforcement officers, prosecutors and other professionals have been trained on techniques to investigate and prosecute ICAC-related cases.

For more information, visit the ICAC Task Force (link is external) webpage at: <https://www.icactaskforce.org/> (link is external). For state-level Operation Broken Heart results, please contact the appropriate state ICAC task force commander. Contact information for task force commanders (link is external) are available online at: <https://www.icactaskforce.org/Pages/ContactsTaskForce.aspx>.