

ROB BONTA

Attorney General

San Diego Human Trafficking Task Force Announces Results of Sex Trafficking Demand-Reduction Operation

Monday, November 7, 2022

Contact: (916) 210-6000, agpressooffice@doj.ca.gov

Operation Century Week complements efforts to tackle human trafficking by working to reduce the demand for commercial sexual exploitation

SAN DIEGO – As part of a joint investigation through the San Diego Human Trafficking Task Force (SDHTTF), California Attorney General Rob Bonta today announced the results of “Operation Century Week.” The multi-jurisdictional, undercover operation, which concluded on Friday, complements ongoing efforts to tackle human trafficking by working to reduce demand for commercial sexual exploitation. As a result of the four-day operation, 30 individuals were arrested for alleged solicitation. The arrests have been referred to the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office and San Diego City Attorney’s Office for potential criminal prosecution.

“Tackling human trafficking in our state takes cooperation and a multi-pronged approach,” **said Attorney General Rob Bonta**. “Demand-reduction operations like ‘Century Week’ are one part of the solution. I’m grateful to all of our partners on the San Diego Human Trafficking Task Force for their ongoing efforts to protect the safety and well-being of all Californians. Combined with our other efforts to eradicate human trafficking, these operations help protect people against exploitation.”

“Sex trafficking is a lucrative industry fueled by demand, and it generates over \$810 million a year in San Diego County,” **said San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan**. “We are fighting this with the dedicated work of the San Diego Regional Human Trafficking Task Force and its efforts in this operation to hold sex buyers accountable. We will not tolerate this modern-day slavery of vulnerable children and young adults being bought and sold like a piece of pizza. Human beings are not for sale.”

“Sheriff’s investigators are relentless in protecting victims,” **said San Diego County Sheriff Anthony Ray**. “We will continue to work in collaboration with local, state, and

federal law enforcement partners to arrest people who victimize and profit from victims of trafficking.”

“Sex trafficking is a lucrative industry that has infiltrated our schools, our businesses, and our neighborhoods. It victimizes those who are most vulnerable and destroys lives,” **said San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott.** “As a member of the Human Trafficking Task Force, we work with law enforcement partners to reduce demand and hold sex buyers accountable while ensuring victims have access to services and counseling at the City of San Diego’s Your Safe Place.”

“Human trafficking is exploitative and predatory. This crime targets some of the most vulnerable members of our community,” **said San Diego Chief of Police David Nisleit.** “We are committed to being proactive by working with our law enforcement and community partners to identify and stop human trafficking cases from claiming more victims.”

“The San Diego Imperial Valley HIDTA proudly supports the federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors who work diligently to protect the most vulnerable members of the public from the dangers associated with human trafficking and drug abuse,” **said Director David King of the San Diego Imperial Valley High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program.**

During Operation Century Week, law enforcement personnel targeted sex buyers by working undercover, posing as individuals offering sex for sale online. Sex buyers who responded to the ads were directed to a predetermined location and subsequently arrested. The operation began last Tuesday and lasted through Friday. It was carried out in several areas across San Diego County — including Encinitas, National City, San Diego, Santee, and elsewhere — in collaboration with various law enforcement agencies. In addition to the arrests for alleged solicitation, approximately 0.25 grams of cocaine and 0.6 grams of ketamine, a controlled substance commonly known as a “date rape” drug, were seized from one of the arrested individuals.

SDHTTF is a cooperative effort involving the California Department of Justice, California Highway Patrol, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Homeland Security Investigations, National City Police Department, San Diego City Attorney’s Office, San Diego County District Attorney’s Office, San Diego County Probation Department, San Diego County Sheriff’s Department, San Diego Police Department, Southwest Border High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of California. In addition to serving as the lead agency on the SDHTTF, the

California Department of Justice has two regional [Human Trafficking and Sexual Predator Apprehension Teams](#) serving Northern California and Southern California.

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery where perpetrators profit from the control and exploitation of men, women, and children for sex or labor through force, fraud, or coercion. Human trafficking does not require movement across borders. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, there were more than 1,300 human trafficking cases reported in California in 2020 — more than any other state in the nation. In California, human trafficking is prevalent in the hospitality, commercial sex, domestic work, and construction industries. Victims of human trafficking are also found among migrant and seasonal agricultural workers, providers of residential care, and in California's garment sector. General information and resources to support survivors of human trafficking is available [here](#).

###