JUSTICE NEWS

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Department of Justice Announces Launch of Human Trafficking Enhanced Enforcement Initiative

WASHINGTON – The Departments of Justice, Homeland Security and Labor announced today the launch of a nationwide Human Trafficking Enhanced Enforcement Initiative designed to streamline federal criminal investigations and prosecutions of human trafficking offenses.

As part of the Enhanced Enforcement Initiative, specialized Anti-Trafficking Coordination Teams, known as ACTeams, will be convened in select pilot districts around the country. The ACTeams, comprised of prosecutors and agents from multiple federal enforcement agencies, will implement a strategic action plan to combat identified human trafficking threats. The ACTeams will focus on developing federal criminal human trafficking investigations and prosecutions to vindicate the rights of human trafficking victims, bring traffickers to justice and dismantle human trafficking networks.

The ACTeam structure not only enhances coordination among federal prosecutors and federal agents on the front lines of federal human trafficking investigations and prosecutions, but also enhances coordination between front-line enforcement efforts and the specialized units at the Department of Justice and federal agency headquarters. The ACTeam Initiative was developed through interagency collaboration among the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security and Labor to streamline rapidly expanding human trafficking enforcement efforts.

“This modern-day slavery is an affront to human dignity, and each and every case we prosecute should send a powerful signal that human trafficking will not be tolerated in the United States,” said Attorney General Eric Holder. “The Human Trafficking Enhanced Enforcement Initiative takes our anti-trafficking enforcement efforts to the next level by building on the most effective tool in our anti-trafficking arsenal: partnerships.”

“Working together, the entire U.S. government continues to make progress in convicting traffickers, dismantling their criminal networks and protecting their victims,” said Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano. “Combating human trafficking is a shared responsibility, and the ACTeam Initiative is a critical step in successfully leveraging all our federal, state and local resources to crack down on these criminals.”

“This pilot is a necessary tool in the federal government’s crackdown on human trafficking,” added Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. “Victims of these contemptuous acts have been left in an unfamiliar land with no family, no support systems, and no way to make a life for themselves. We must do whatever we can to ensure that victims of trafficking receive full restitution, including denied wages.”
On Oct. 29, 2010, at an event commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the Department of Justice announced that the Interagency ACTeam Initiative would be implemented in conjunction with directives within the Department of Justice to enhance coordination among the Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys, U.S. Attorney’s Offices and the department’s subject matter experts in the Civil Rights Division’s Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section.

The ACTeam initiative follows the July 22, 2010, launch of the Department of Homeland Security’s Blue Campaign, which includes new web-based training for law enforcement officers, enhanced resources for trafficking victims and expanded public awareness campaigns. The ACTeam Initiative also follows the Department of Labor’s March 15, 2010, announcement that it would, in coordination with other federal agencies, begin certifying U non-immigrant visas for human trafficking victims and other qualifying crime victims who are identified during the course of labor investigations and enforcement actions.

*The locations of the pilot ACTeams will be announced upon completion of a competitive interagency selection process.*