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OC Sheriff Public Affairs: 714-904-7042

OC District Attorney's Office PIO: 714-504-1917

Multi-agency 'Operation Red Zone' results in 56 human trafficking arrests

SANTA ANA, Ca. (Feb. 18, 2022): Fifty-six suspects were arrested and 16 victims were recovered, including two juveniles under the age of 16, as part of an extensive multi-jurisdictional human trafficking enforcement operation conducted February 9 through February 12 in Orange County.

The Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center coordinated Operation Red Zone in partnership with 11 local law enforcement agencies, the Orange County District Attorney's Office and the US Department of Homeland Security to identify victims of human trafficking and hold their perpetrators accountable.

"We sent a message loud and clear that human trafficking will be met with swift action in Orange County," said Don Barnes, Sheriff-Coroner. "Through inter-department collaboration, we deployed substantial investigative resources across the county and were able to make a significant number of arrests. Most importantly two young victims have been brought to safety and resources were offered to other victims."

"Human traffickers know that if they come to Orange County, we are going to find them, we are going to arrest them, and we are going to prosecute them. Proactive investigations like this allow law enforcement agencies to contact vulnerable victims of sex trafficking who might have otherwise never been able to escape their traffickers and receive valuable victim services that can help them heal and every arrest we make and every case we file serves as a message to human traffickers everywhere: don't come to Orange County," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "Every human trafficker we take off the street prevents vulnerable victims from ever becoming trafficking victims."

The more than four dozen arrests included men ages 20 to 55 from Orange and Los Angeles counties. Charges included human trafficking, pimping and pandering, solicitation for sex, and narcotics. In addition, one unregistered handgun was recovered.

Agencies conducted multiple operations utilizing investigative techniques most impactful for their specific city. This included undercover operations, investigation into online-based sex solicitation websites and investigations into known problematic businesses.

Individuals identified as victims were connected with services through Waymakers, a victim-assistance program that provides immediate crisis intervention to provide emergency shelter, transportation and necessities such as food and clothing to victims of human trafficking. Juvenile victims are connected to services through the Orange County Social Services Agency.





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The Operation Red Zone agencies are:

- Anaheim Police Department
- Buena Park Police Department
- Costa Mesa Police Department
- Fountain Valley Police Department
- Fullerton Police Department
- Garden Grove Police Department
- Huntington Beach PD
- US Department of Homeland Security
- Irvine Police Department
- Laguna Beach Police Department
- Orange County Sheriff's Department
- OC District Attorney's Office
- Santa Ana Police Department
- Westminster Police Department

Additional information on agency-specific operations can be obtained by contacting participating agencies' Public Information Officers. If you are a victim of human trafficking or suspect human trafficking activity in your community, please call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888-373-7888. Anonymous tips can be submitted to OC Crime Stoppers at 855-TIP-OCCS (855-847-6227) or at occrimestoppers.org.

About the Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center

The Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center (OCIAC) is located in Orange County, California. The OCIAC fusion center was formed in 2007 to meet the need for information sharing among federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and other public safety disciplines.

As a fusion center, OCIAC serves as a focal point within the local environment for the receipt, analysis, gathering, and sharing of threat-related information between the federal government and state, local, tribal, territorial (SLTT) and private sector partners.

Direct responsibility for the overall policy and direction of OCIAC rests with the Orange County Sheriff-Coroner in close coordination with the Orange County Chiefs of Police and Sheriff's Association (OCCPSA).

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