



UNITED STATES MISSION  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS  
IN GENEVA  
December 3, 2015

**OHCHR REGISTRY**

Ms. Imma Guerras-Delgado  
Advisor on Child Rights  
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Geneva, Switzerland

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Dear Ms. Guerras-Delgado:

Thank you for your inquiry regarding information and communications technology (ICT) and child sexual exploitation. The online sexual exploitation of children poses a grave challenge to nations around the world, including the United States. We are committed to prosecuting alleged offenders, protecting victims, and preventing the crimes from occurring.

There are a number of federal programs which address ICT-related child sexual exploitation. For instance, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force Program helps state and local law enforcement agencies develop an effective response to technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and Internet crimes against children. The program was developed in response to the increasing number of children and teenagers using the Internet, the proliferation of child sexual abuse images available electronically, and heightened online activity by predators seeking unsupervised contact with potential underage victims. By helping state and local agencies to develop effective, sustainable responses to online child victimization, OJJDP has increased the capacity of thousands of communities across the country to combat Internet crimes against children. Since its inception in 1998, the ICAC task force program has conducted more than 300,000 investigations resulting in the arrest of more than 58,000 individuals.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Child Exploitation Investigations Unit (CEIU) directs ICE's Homeland Security Investigations office in its mission to investigate large-scale producers and distributors of child pornography, as well as individuals who travel abroad for the purpose of engaging in sex with minors. The CEIU employs the latest technology to collect evidence and track the activities of individuals and organized groups who sexually exploit children through the use of websites, chat rooms, newsgroups, and peer-to-peer trading.

DHS's Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT) is an international alliance of law enforcement agencies and private industry sector partners working together to prevent and deter online

child sexual abuse. The VGT includes investigations of child sex tourism into its portfolio, creating a global network of collaboration to combat this crime.

The United States also regularly engages in multilateral anti-crime diplomatic efforts to share best practices and coordinate responses to online child sexual exploitation. For instance, the G-7 Roma-Lyon Group has completed several joint initiatives in recent years through its Law Enforcement Projects Sub-Group and its High Tech Crimes Sub-Group, which the United States chairs.

While technology has increased the capabilities of child sex offenders, it has also helped revolutionize and enhance our abilities to prevent, detect, and disrupt online child sexual abuse and exploitation and to identify and prosecute predators.

An example of a program that uses ICT to protect children who have been sexually exploited is the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). NCMEC operates the CyberTipline, which receives leads and tips regarding suspected crimes of sexual exploitation committed against children. Since its inception in 1998, the CyberTipline has received more than 6.5 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation from the public, as well as private companies (Google, Facebook, Yahoo!, etc). The CyberTipline is operated in partnership with the FBI, DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, U.S. Secret Service, military criminal investigative organizations, DOJ, and state and local law enforcement agencies. NCMEC receives the reports, examines the content, and adds relevant information from public and privately donated databases that can assist law enforcement in their investigation, and then provides the entire package to the appropriate investigatory agency. DHS ICE helped establish virtual private networks to facilitate the transmission of CyberTipline referrals to foreign counterparts.

Another example is the DHS ICE Victim Identification Program (VIP). This program combines technological and investigative capabilities and resources to rescue child victims of sexual exploitation. During its first two years of operation, VIP has been responsible for over 180 victims identified and/or rescued from around the country. ICE has recently launched an educational outreach program called Project iGuardian, in conjunction with NCMEC and ICAC. Project iGuardian aims to educate children and parents about online safety and methods for staying safe from online sexual predators. ICE HSI also has a smartphone app designed to seek the public's help with fugitive and unknown suspected child predators. All tips can be reported anonymously through the app, by phone or online. In many cases, ICE HSI has been able to make an arrest just hours after issuing a nationwide plea for public assistance.

Further, DOJ employs technology to engage and educate minors susceptible to exploitation where that exploitation first occurs – on the Internet, on social media, and on mobile technologies. It also employs novel investigative techniques to counter the increasingly sophisticated tactics used by offenders to obscure their identities.

The United States Government will be submitting our report on the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in January 2016, which will contain additional information on technology and child exploitation. The United States considers child sexual exploitation a serious offense, and we will continue to take steps to combat it and protect victims.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith M. Harper', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Keith M. Harper  
Ambassador  
U.S. Representative to the Human Rights Council