



'Operation Lost Souls' Rescues 70 Children, Including Sex Trafficking Victims, in Texas, Colorado and Mexico

Description

USA/MEXICO: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) authorities have announced the rescue of 70 missing children, including many who had been kidnapped by sex trafficking gangs, in parts of the American Southwest and Northern Mexico.

"Operation Lost Souls" was a joint local, state and federal sting operation and recovered the missing children throughout Texas, as well as the state of Colorado and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, according to an ICE [press release](#).

The joint operation ran for three weeks and its results were announced on May 25, which is also National Missing Children's Day. The rescued children included victims of sex trafficking and physical and sexual abuse, with many having endured "unimaginable" abuse at the hands of sex traffickers and pedophiles. According to ICE, the agencies involved provided counseling to the children and their families.

"Operation Lost Souls exemplifies Homeland Security Investigations' commitment to protecting the public from crimes of victimization. In this case, we are looking out for our children — our community's most precious resource," HSI El Paso Deputy Special Agent Taekuk Cho said in the press release. "HSI is committed to continue working with our law enforcement partners to locate, recover and help missing children heal, while ensuring that perpetrators are held responsible for these heinous crimes and brought to justice."

“At the Department of Public Safety, teamwork is one of our core values,” Texas DPS Major Matthew Mull added. “We are grateful for all of our law enforcement partners who participated in this operation and who work around-the-clock every day to protect our communities, including our youth.”

The Daily Wire [report](#) the announcement of “Operation Lost Souls” comes days after authorities arrested eight individuals in connection with a 15-year-old girl who was allegedly [trafficked from a Dallas Mavericks game](#) on April 8.

The girl allegedly separated from her father to use the restroom at the game and was later seen leaving the American Airlines Center with an unknown man. A few days later, the Texas Counter-Trafficking Initiative found the girl's nude photos displayed on a website associated with prostitution. Police in Oklahoma City were able to recover the victim on April 18 — 11 days after her disappearance.

“We are thankful for the work of the Oklahoma City Police Department and the recovery of our daughter. My heart breaks for the unimaginable things my daughter had to endure for the 11 days she was taken, and I am so glad she is safe as we work toward her recovery,” the girl's mother said in a May 5 statement.

Zeke Fortenberry, an attorney representing the family, questioned how the male suspect who allegedly lured the girl from the arena was able to obtain a fraudulent ticket.

“The systems and organizations involved in this case continually failed the victim. She should never have had contact with the man at the Mavericks game,” Fortenberry said. *“This victim's life will forever be changed.”*

Following an interview on [Candace](#) last year, Tim Ballard — a former Department of Homeland Security special agent and founder of [Operation Underground Railroad](#) — explained that Americans are the [largest drivers of demand](#) for the \$150 billion global sex trafficking industry.

“The country with the highest demand is going to be the country most exposed to sexual material,” Ballard said. *“And so, what country is as large as the United States where everyone has access to the internet? None. So that's my theory as to why the United States is the largest consumer.”*

by Baxter Dmitry

Category

1. Crime-Justice-Terrorism-Corruption
2. Main

Date Created

06/01/2022