



# Department of Justice

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## **DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RELEASES FIRST NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR CHILD EXPLOITATION PREVENTION AND INTERDICTION**

### ***U.S. Marshals Service to Launch Nationwide Operation Targeting Top 500 Most Dangerous, Non-compliant Sex Offenders***

Jackson, Miss – Following an announcement today by Attorney General Eric Holder, U.S. Attorney Donald R. Burkhalter announced that the Department of Justice released its first ever National Strategy for Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction. The strategy also provides the first ever comprehensive threat assessment of the dangers facing children from child pornography, online enticement, child sex tourism, commercial sexual exploitation, and sexual exploitation in Indian Country, and outlines a blueprint to strengthen the fight against these crimes. The strategy builds upon the department's accomplishments in combating child exploitation by establishing specific, aggressive goals and priorities and increasing cooperation and collaboration at all levels of government and the private sector.

As part of the overall strategy, the U.S. Marshals Service is launching a nationwide operation targeting the top 500 most dangerous, non-compliant sex offenders in the nation. Additionally, the department will create a national database to allow federal, state, tribal, local and international law enforcement partners to deconflict their cases with each other, engage in undercover operations from a portal facilitated or hosted by the database, share information and intelligence and conduct analysis on dangerous offenders and future threats and trends. The department also created 38 additional Assistant U.S. Attorney positions to devote to child exploitation cases, and over the coming months will work to fill the vacancies and train the new assistants in this specialized area.

“Although we’ve made meaningful progress in protecting children across the country, and although we’ve brought a record number of offenders to justice in recent years, it is time to renew our commitment to this work. It is time to intensify our efforts,” said Attorney General Holder. “This new Strategy provides the roadmap necessary to do just that – to streamline our education, prevention and prosecution activities; to improve information sharing and collaboration; and to make the most effective use of limited resources. Together, we are sending an important message – that the U.S. government, and our nation’s Department of Justice, has never been more committed to protecting our children and to bringing offenders to justice.”

U.S. Attorney Donald R. Burkhalter stated: “The continuing commitment of the Attorney General to address what is surely the most heinous crimes committed against children, is a welcome reaffirmation of priorities by the Department of Justice. This is especially true in light of recent trends in sentencings by some judges who are dismissive of the harm done by defendants who “merely possess” images of child pornography. This failure to recognize mere possessors as essential links in the child pornography chain can only be remedied by the continuing prosecution of ALL child pornographers --- producers, purveyors and possessors. I am especially pleased that the U.S. Marshal Service has stepped up with a commitment of resources to attack the worst of these criminals. At a time of limited resources by some, such an effort is greatly needed.”

The strategy first analyzed the threat to our nation’s children and described the current efforts at all levels of the government against this threat. Since FY 2006, the Department of Justice has filed 8,464 Project Safe Childhood (PSC) cases against 8,637 defendants. These cases include prosecutions of online enticement of children to engage in sexual activity, interstate transportation of children to engage in sexual activity, production, distribution and possession of child pornography, and other offenses. In the Southern District of Mississippi, 22 PSC cases have been filed against 22 defendants.

Despite vigorously fighting all aspects of child exploitation, the department recognized that more work remains to be done. To that end, the department’s strategy lays out goals to increase coordination among the nation’s investigators, better train investigators and prosecutors, advance law enforcement’s technological capabilities and enhance research to inform decisions on deterrence, incarceration and monitoring. The strategy also includes a renewed commitment to public awareness and community outreach.

As part of its public outreach efforts, the department is re-launching [ProjectSafeChildhood.gov](http://ProjectSafeChildhood.gov), the Project Safe Childhood (PSC) public website. PSC is a department initiative launched in 2006 that aims to combat the proliferation of technology-facilitated sexual exploitation crimes against children. Led by U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, PSC marshals federal, state, tribal and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims.

For more information regarding the National Strategy to Combat Child Exploitation, Prevention and Interdiction, please visit: [www.projectsafechildhood.gov/docs/natstrategyreport.pdf](http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov/docs/natstrategyreport.pdf).

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