

**Report on the Tenth
Anniversary of the
Trafficking Victims Protection Act**



**United States Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division**

October 29, 2010

“The United States was founded on the principle that all people are born with an unalienable right to freedom . . . Yet even today, the darkness and inhumanity of enslavement exists . . . Fighting modern slavery and human trafficking is a shared responsibility . . . Together we can and must end this most serious, ongoing criminal civil rights violation.”

--Proclamation of President Barack Obama, January 2010

“There is no more basic human right than freedom from slavery . . . Yet, in its modern form of trafficking, this cruel practice persists on an enormous and alarming scale . . . [C]ombating the entrapment, abuse, and exploitation of trafficking victims is one of this Justice Department’s highest priorities.”

*--Address of Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr.,
National Conference on Human Trafficking, May 2010*

Involuntary Servitude, Slavery, and Human Trafficking: The Dawn of the TVPA Decade

The Tenth Anniversary of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) gives us occasion to reflect upon the remarkable strides our nation has made in combating human trafficking in the decade since the TVPA's landmark provisions took effect on October 28, 2000. The enactment of the TVPA sparked a decade of progress toward eradicating modern-day slavery, a national endeavor that traces back to the Thirteenth Amendment's command, in 1865, that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude ... shall exist within the United States."

Over the last ten years, we have recognized more than ever before that the fight to deliver on the promise of freedom can only be won through broad-based, collaborative efforts to address all dimensions of human trafficking. Among all the advances since passage of the TVPA, perhaps the most notable is the evolution of the strong partnerships between federal, state, local, and international law enforcement, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who assist victims of human trafficking and advocate to bring an end to modern-day slavery. These partnerships have brought together our collective expertise in criminal justice, gender equality, refugee and migrant rights, labor relations, foreign policy, and—perhaps most critically—the restoration of the lives of traumatized victims. The increasingly effective partnerships between law enforcement and NGOs have generated significant momentum behind our shared efforts as a nation to bring justice to those held in bondage in the land of the free.

From its founding in 1957, the Civil Rights Division has vigorously enforced the Thirteenth Amendment's promise of freedom, bringing cases under the involuntary servitude and slavery statutes. As one Department of Justice Civil Rights attorney commented in 1943, describing the work of the Civil Rights Section that was the predecessor of today's Civil Rights Division, "[n]o small part of the work of the Civil Rights Section is that concerned with the enforcement of the rights secured by the Thirteenth Amendment, the right of persons to be free of involuntary servitude."¹

There are few violations more degrading to the dignity of the individual, and few offenses more intolerable in a nation founded on liberty, than the crime of human trafficking, which denies some of the most vulnerable members of our society their most basic rights to freedom and self-determination. Human traffickers know no boundaries or borders, and their crimes cruelly exploit men, women, and children; citizens, guestworkers, and undocumented migrants; extracting profit from the toil of others in farm fields and factories, strip clubs and suburban mansions, brothels and bars.

While the historic involuntary servitude and slavery statutes criminalized many of the badges and incidents of slavery that held vulnerable workers in perpetual servitude, experience proved that these laws fell short of addressing the full scope and complexity of modern-day

¹ Risa L. Goluboff, *The Thirteenth Amendment and the Lost Origins of Civil Rights*, 50 Duke L.J. 1609, 1639 (2001) (citing Fred G. Folsom, *A Slave Trade Law in a Contemporary Setting*, 29 Cornell L.Q. 203, 203 (1943)).

slavery. Experience has shown that human trafficking crimes involve multi-faceted criminal enterprises that frequently combine psychological coercion, sexual exploitation, violent crime, transnational organized crime, money laundering and financial crime, visa fraud and immigration offenses, and labor exploitation.

Enactment of the TVPA: A Comprehensive, Victim-Centered Law

In the 1988 opinion in *United States v. Kozminski*, the Supreme Court recognized the limitations of existing involuntary servitude and slavery statutes, and invited Congress to expand upon them. Congress accepted the invitation by enacting the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, a comprehensive, victim-centered statute that extended beyond traditional involuntary servitude and slavery enforcement to mobilize broad-based government-wide efforts to eradicate modern-day slavery in all its forms and restore the rights and dignity of victims. On October 28, 2000, President William Jefferson Clinton signed the TVPA into law, as part of the broader Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, which also made significant advances in the fight to end violence against women.

In enacting the TVPA, Congress recognized that psychological coercion and threats of non-violent coercion can be every bit as powerful as physical force in overcoming the will of vulnerable victims, and criminalized these more subtle, more complex forms of coercion as modern-day manifestations of the historic badges and incidents of slavery. The TVPA not only greatly extended the reach of criminal anti-trafficking statutes; it also established an array of victim protections, prevention programs, and policy and coordination mechanisms that spurred a coordinated, inter-disciplinary response.

In addition, for the first time, the TVPA embedded the historic struggle against the legacy of American chattel slavery, a decades-long priority of the Civil Rights Division, within the broader global campaign to end the intolerable affront to freedom that had come to be known internationally as human trafficking.

The same burgeoning consciousness surrounding the servitude of human beings that contributed to the enactment of the TVPA in October 2000 also contributed significantly to the adoption of the Palermo Protocol to the United Nations Convention against International Organized Crime. The United States became a signatory to this *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, on December 13, 2000, thus squarely situating our nation's abiding commitment to eradicating the legacy of servitude and slavery within the broader international campaign against the exploitation of human beings for labor, services, sexual servitude, and slavery.

The enactment of the TVPA and the adoption of the Palermo Protocol ushered in a decade of unprecedented momentum, both in the United States and globally, in the fight to end human trafficking and modern-day slavery and deliver on the promise of freedom.

Impact of the TVPA: Prosecutions

The TVPA enormously strengthened our nation's ability to bring traffickers to justice. It gave law enforcement the powerful tools needed to punish and deter all forms of modern-day slavery, whether for labor, services, or commercial sex acts; whether targeting citizens or undocumented migrants; whether through physical violence or psychological coercion; or whether through the commercial sexual exploitation of children, a population so inherently vulnerable that the law requires no proof of their coercion.

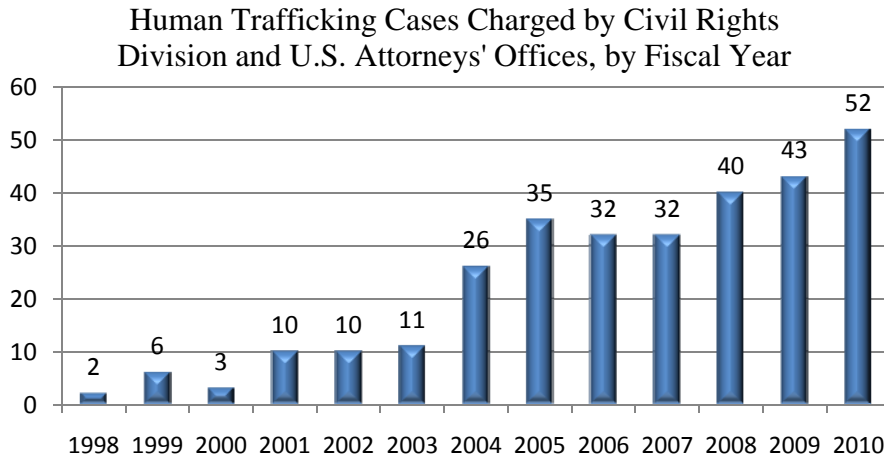
Over this decade of pursuing freedom and justice for victims of human trafficking, we have learned that human trafficking is often hidden in plain sight, in places once thought to be immune. We have rescued victims and prosecuted traffickers from Anchorage, Alaska to American Samoa; from Houston to Honolulu; and from Long Island to Los Angeles. Victims rescued in recent cases have hailed from Nigeria and Nicaragua, Thailand and Togo; Swaziland and Seattle.

While the rescue of trafficking victims and the restoration of their fundamental rights are central to all anti-trafficking efforts, prosecutions play a critical role in punishing and deterring the offense of exploiting other human beings. Vigorous prosecution of human traffickers sends a clear message that human trafficking is intolerable in a nation founded on individual rights. It also serves as a powerful means of dismantling the criminal networks that prey on the vulnerability of disempowered members of our society.

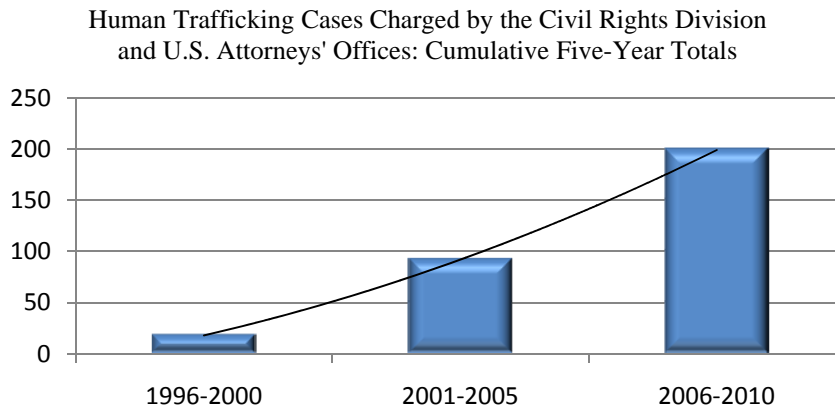
Since the advent of the TVPA, the Department of Justice has made significant strides in prosecuting human traffickers, using both the new TVPA provisions and the older involuntary servitude statutes that remain in effect. To enforce these criminal statutes, the Department relies on strong partnerships among United States Attorneys' Offices around the country and the Department's human trafficking subject matter experts—the specialized Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit (HTPU) created within the Civil Rights Division in 2007, the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) within the Criminal Division, and the FBI's Civil Rights and Crimes Against Children Units.

CEOS, with its broad expertise in child sexual exploitation offenses such as child pornography and child sex tourism, leads the Department's efforts in combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children, including the sex trafficking of minors in violation of the TVPA, with the support of the National Coordinator for Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction in the Office of the Deputy Attorney General. HTPU, with its depth of experience in the Civil Rights Division's historic involuntary servitude and slavery enforcement efforts, provides the expertise in the Department's efforts to combat labor trafficking and the sex trafficking of adults through force, fraud, and coercion. In the increasing number of cases that involve the sex trafficking of both adults and minors, or a combination of sex trafficking and labor trafficking, CEOS and HTPU coordinate closely with one another and with U.S. Attorneys' Offices to bring the full force of the Department's experience and expertise to bear in effectively prosecuting human traffickers.

Our enforcement efforts have steadily produced record results since the advent of the TVPA.



The increased volume of federal prosecutions brought by the Civil Rights Division and U.S. Attorneys' Offices becomes particularly apparent when reflecting on the changes over five-year periods. During the TVPA decade, the cumulative number of cases charged in each five-year period has steadily increased, as reflected in the chart below, from 18 cases over the five fiscal years preceding the TVPA's enactment, to 92 cases over the first five fiscal years of enforcing the TVPA, to 199 cases during the past five fiscal years:



The TVPA's broader criminal statutes, combined with the victim protections that have encouraged victims to report human trafficking crimes and increasing public awareness and law enforcement expertise in identifying human trafficking, have all contributed to this momentum.

These cases brought by the Civil Rights Division and U.S. Attorneys' Offices are in addition to child sex trafficking cases brought by CEOS and U.S. Attorneys' Offices, and their law enforcement partners on the Innocence Lost National Initiative. Founded in 2003 through a partnership between the FBI's Crimes Against Children Unit, CEOS, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), the Innocence Lost National Initiative brings together state and federal law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and social service providers to

combat domestic commercial sexual exploitation of children in the United States. The Initiative has resulted in the development of 37 task forces and working groups throughout the country. From the inception of the program through October 2009, these groups have rescued over 891 children from commercial sexual exploitation and produced over 500 convictions in state and federal court, according to FBI statistics.

Significantly, while we have seen a measurable increase in the volume of prosecutions since the advent of the TVPA, we have also seen a dramatic increase in the scope, complexity, magnitude, and impact of many of our human trafficking cases, while also bringing record numbers of criminal civil rights prosecutions such as hate crimes and police misconduct. In recent years, the Civil Rights Division has partnered increasingly closely with the Criminal Division's Organized Crime and Racketeering Section to bring human trafficking cases under the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act. This collaboration has allowed us to address the international organized crime dimensions of human in cases involving Asian massage parlors in Massachusetts, Ukrainian criminal networks exploiting janitorial service workers in Pennsylvania, and an Uzbek organized crime ring that exploited Filipino, Dominican, and Jamaican guestworkers in Missouri and thirteen other states.

In the latter case, *United States v. Askharkhodjaev*, nine defendants were convicted for participating in a 14-state conspiracy to defraud legitimate guestworker programs and exploit guestworkers. The scheme involved holding the workers in fear that they would be deported and their families penalized if they refused to comply with the defendants' demands that they work in hotels and other service jobs in violations of their visas, and that they reside in overcrowded, substandard housing and pay inflated housing charges that the defendants deducted from the victims' earnings.

Other recent convictions have involved scores of Filipino victims held in service jobs in elite country clubs in Florida; young West African victims held in servitude in hair braiding salons in New Jersey and sexually abused by their captors; and Filipino guestworkers held to labor in chain hotels in South Dakota.

These forced labor cases have involved different sectors of the economy, different forms of coercion, and different regions of the country – but each has involved the use of intimidation and fear to overcome the will of vulnerable victims. In *United States v. Afolabi*, the lead defendant and her co-conspirators recruited more than 20 young women and girls, ranging from 10 to 19 years old, from impoverished villages in Togo and Ghana. The victims were compelled to work at hair braiding salons for up to 14 hours per day, six or seven days a week, and to turn over all of their earnings, including any tips, to the defendants. The defendants confiscated the victims' passports, isolated them in the defendants' residence, and held them in fear through physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, earning thousands of dollars a month off the victims' compelled labor. The lead defendant was sentenced to 27 years in prison and the defendants were ordered to pay \$3.9 million in restitution to the victims.

We have also brought significant cases against traffickers who victimize U.S. citizens, exploiting homeless African-American men for farm labor in Florida, and compelling vulnerable young U.S. citizen women and girls into prostitution in states and localities across the country.

In *United States v. Evans*, the lead defendant was sentenced to 30 years after being convicted of multiple offenses arising from his scheme to recruit homeless African-American men from shelters, hold them in bondage in labor camps by providing addictive drugs, and impose charges to hold the victims in perpetual debt. In *United States v. Paris*, ten defendants were convicted and the lead defendant was sentenced to 30 years for luring and exploiting young, vulnerable women and girls from Vermont and Connecticut and compelling them to perform commercial sex acts for the defendants' profit, using beatings, rapes, threats, and manipulation of access to addictive drugs to maintain control over them.

We have brought large-scale cases to vindicate the rights of foreign-born and U.S. citizen victims alike, but in doing so, we have never lost sight of the fact that modern-day slavery is an affront to our most fundamental values whether it targets one victim or dozens, and we have, accordingly, brought cases to vindicate the rights and freedoms of individual domestic servitude victims from Indonesia, the Philippines, Egypt, Peru, Swaziland, Haiti, Nigeria, and Cameroon—among others.

In one recent single-victim case, *United States v. Nnaji*, one defendant was sentenced to 20 years and another to eight years for holding a Nigerian woman in domestic servitude for eight years. The victim, a widowed mother of six children, one of them chronically ill, was recruited from her impoverished village on promises that her children would be cared for in exchange for her work. The victim was enslaved virtually without pay, receiving a total of about three hundred dollars over eight years of providing cooking, cleaning, and child care day and night, seven days a week. The defendants refused the victim's request to return home, and instead compelled her labor by confiscating her passport, sexually assaulting her, and isolating her until a Nigerian priest helped her escape.

In addition to federal prosecutions, an increasing number of states have begun prosecuting human trafficking cases under recently enacted state anti-trafficking laws, holding additional traffickers to account for their crimes.

It is difficult to measure the impact of each of these prosecutions—whether they affect one victim or dozens. For each victim whose freedom is restored, who is reunited with parents and children, and for every survivor who regains a voice after years of being silenced, the impact is immeasurable.

In some cases, dozens or even hundreds of victims are rescued and restored to a life of dignity and freedom. Sadly, though, in many cases we learn of dozens more who were not rescued, having been exploited and discarded before we could find them, their names recorded in ledgers seized from the traffickers, their faces remembered by other victims, but their fates unknown.

While we may never know with certainty the full impact of any single prosecution, we know from victims who have escaped captivity that even a single prosecution can represent untold dozens of trafficking crimes prevented, and untold dozens of human lives protected and lived out in freedom.

A Comprehensive, Multi-Disciplinary Approach: Broad-Based Partnerships to Combat Human Trafficking

Although DOJ's anti-trafficking efforts are rooted in decades of involuntary servitude prosecutions, the TVPA decade has seen tremendous expansion in the scope and complexity of these efforts. Once consisting of a handful of prosecutions brought by a small but dedicated group of civil rights lawyers, the Department's anti-trafficking response has evolved into a comprehensive, broad-based strategy, drawing on the expertise of specialized units throughout the Department, in close coordination with key partners in federal, state, local, and international government, multi-lateral organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

In the increasing number of prosecutions involving both human trafficking and organized crime, HTPU has partnered with the Department's Organized Crime and Racketeering prosecutors, and has participated in the Criminal Division's implementation of the International Organized Crime Strategy, which in 2008 identified human trafficking as one of the threats posed by international organized criminal networks.

In addition, HTPU works closely with the Criminal Division's Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training (OPDAT) and Office of International Affairs (OIA) to strengthen our partnerships with law enforcement authorities internationally. HTPU, OPDAT, and OIA have collaborated to build prosecutorial capacity, strengthen relationships with national prosecuting authorities overseas, and secure critical evidence and extraditions in countries around the globe.

One notable international coordination effort has centered around the human trafficking networks operating on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. HTPU has partnered with OPDAT, OIA, the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Mexican national law enforcement authorities to develop bilateral investigations and prosecutions of transnational trafficking networks, and to engage in prosecutorial capacity-building with the support of OPDAT and the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (GTIP). The U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Enforcement Initiative has produced landmark prosecutions under Mexico's anti-trafficking law, charging associates of traffickers under investigation and prosecution in the U.S. As a result of the coordinated efforts, our Mexican law enforcement partners have located and rescued additional victims and identified additional traffickers associated with targets in U.S. trafficking investigations and prosecutions, and have apprehended fugitives, significantly strengthening the impact of U.S. enforcement efforts. Through this initiative, we have taken significant strides toward implementing a transnational response to this transnational criminal enterprise.

The Department-wide anti-trafficking effort extends far beyond these partnerships in criminal investigations and prosecutions. Since the advent of the TVPA, the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) has led efforts to strengthen our nationwide response to human trafficking on a variety of fronts. Its Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) has developed and administered an Anti-Trafficking Task Force Initiative, funding task forces nationwide through grants to local law enforcement agencies that have mobilized partners in State and Local law enforcement. BJA has funded up to 42 of these Task Forces to bring together Federal, State, and Local law

enforcement, other government agencies, and NGOs to form multi-disciplinary anti-trafficking partnerships to more effectively identify and assist human trafficking victims.

Many of these task forces have proactively engaged the local law enforcement agencies that have proven to be the eyes and ears on the ground in detecting signs of human trafficking, opening channels of communication between multiple local law enforcement agencies in the region, NGOs, and government regulators, inspectors, and licensing authorities, and first responders positioned to detect human trafficking indicators. Many Task Forces have been leaders in providing multi-disciplinary training to hundreds of local law enforcement agencies and NGOs in best practices for detecting, investigating, and prosecuting human trafficking and serving human trafficking victims.

In connection with the Task Force Initiative, OJP's Office for Victims of Crime provides grants to non-governmental victim service providers to meet the needs of human trafficking victims, and has established a Training and Technical Assistance Center that assists BJA and OVC in providing guidance and expertise to human trafficking task forces and victim service grantees.

OJP has also been instrumental in organizing the National Conferences on Human Trafficking that bring together federal, state, and local law enforcement, government agencies, and NGOs to coordinate their anti-trafficking efforts and exchange expertise. In addition, OJP's National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics have funded studies and compiled and analyzed data to enhance our understanding of the human trafficking threat and the law enforcement response. OJP and OVC continue to introduce innovations to further strengthen anti-trafficking programs, organizing Regional Training Forums for task forces to exchange intelligence with one another and engage in networking among law enforcement and victim service providers regionally.

DOJ has also, as part of its broad-based anti-trafficking efforts, engaged State authorities to strengthen State anti-trafficking laws. In 2004, the Department published a Model State Anti-Trafficking Criminal Statute to guide states in criminalizing human trafficking. Forty-Four states now have some form of criminal anti-trafficking legislation, many based in part on the model state statute promulgated by the Department.

As part of its role implementing the TVPA, the Department also prepares the Attorney General's Annual Report to Congress and Assessment of U.S. Government Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons. This Report, mandated by the TVPA, provides an opportunity to assess government-wide anti-trafficking efforts of DOJ and its many federal government partners in the fight against human trafficking. In addition, the Department collaborates with other federal agencies on interagency bodies such as the President's Interagency Task Force on Human Trafficking and the Senior Policy Operating Group, both established by the TVPA to enhance coordination among the many agencies addressing different dimensions of human trafficking.

DOJ's engagement with these interagency coordinating bodies reflects the TVPA's intensive focus on partnerships—both among government agencies and between government and civil society—as critical to combating human trafficking on all fronts. These partnerships

include numerous law enforcement agencies, including FBI, ICE, the Department of Labor's Office of the Inspector General and Wage and Hour Division, and the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service, who come together on human trafficking investigations and prosecutions.

These partnerships also include the State Department's GTIP Office, the Department of Health and Human Services' Anti-Trafficking in Persons Program, and the Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Service. All of these diverse agencies have come together with the NGO community to engage in coordinated prevention efforts, such as the development of a pamphlet issued in 2009 to advise nonimmigrant visa-holders of their rights, developed through a collaborative partnership among government agencies and NGOs under the leadership of GTIP.

Restoration of Victims

In addition to expanding criminal statutes and ushering in a decade of progress in prosecuting human traffickers, the TVPA is perhaps most significant for its ground-breaking victim protection provisions. Without lawful documentation or the support necessary to stabilize a life disrupted by trauma, in the days before the TVPA, human trafficking victims continued to suffer fear, dislocation, and uncertainty long after escaping servitude, making it exceedingly difficult for law enforcement to earn the trust of traumatized victims.

The victim protection provisions in the TVPA provide temporary lawful immigration status and humanitarian benefits to qualifying human trafficking victims who, by virtue of their undocumented status, lacked the legal status to remain in the country and had been ineligible for the crime victim assistance funds and public entitlement programs accessible to U.S. citizen crime victims.

These victim protections and benefits have not only restored human trafficking victims to lives of security and stability; they have also significantly strengthened prosecution efforts by stabilizing victims, affording them a sense of security and support, and empowering them to come forward and assist authorities in bringing their traffickers to justice.

The TVPA's victim protections have had a significant impact, both on the lives of trafficking victims, and on our ability to investigate and prosecute human traffickers, largely because of the efforts of dedicated non-governmental victim advocates who have brought these victim protections to life.

These non-governmental victim advocates have supported, strengthened, and sustained victims, enabling them to overcome their trauma and become empowered survivors. They have provided shelter, medical care, trauma counseling, legal representation, family reunification assistance, interpretation, education, vocational training, and support through the sometimes overwhelming criminal justice process. These NGOs bring expertise in the care and legal representation of human trafficking victims. In some cases, dedicated victim advocates have supported individual victims for the better part of a decade, from the time the victims were first rescued and too traumatized to speak; through the time they courageously testified at trial and

spoke out at sentencing; throughout their struggles to reunite with their children; and onward until they achieved Lawful Permanent Residency or, in some instances, citizenship.

Tireless NGO victim advocates stood shoulder to shoulder with trafficking victims and with law enforcement even before the TVPA, but the TVPA's introduction of victim-centered legal protections and victim assistance programs immeasurably strengthened partnerships between NGOs and law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies on the front lines of human trafficking investigations and prosecutions are acutely aware that behind each significant success, there is a tireless NGO victim advocate bringing specialized expertise in victim care to build bridges of trust between law enforcement and victims who are often initially too traumatized to confide.

Victim assistance NGOs come together from around the country, addressing the needs of trafficking victims from a variety of perspectives, reflecting their expertise not only in human trafficking, but also in international human rights, gender equality, poverty and international development issues, civil rights, crime victims' rights, migration issues, refugee and immigrant rights, sexual exploitation and sexual violence issues, and labor equity issues. The increasingly strong and broad-based partnerships between law enforcement and these diverse organizations has been one of the most significant developments over the first decade of the TVPA.

Central to these partnerships are many professionals in government who serve as liaisons between the victim assistance organizations and the law enforcement investigation and prosecution teams. These victim assistance experts in the Department's Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) and Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), and the the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division of the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement, collaborate to develop, fund, and guide NGO victim assistance programs, improve law enforcement capacity to work successfully with crime victims, and streamline access to victim assistance in fast-moving investigations and prosecutions. These programs have steadily expanded and improved in their ability to meet the needs of trafficking victims. OVC also recently launched a cutting-edge demonstration project to provide comprehensive services to domestic minor victims of sex and labor trafficking. This innovative program responds to identified challenges in assisting under-served victim populations.

Law enforcement victim-witness coordinators in HTPU, ICE, FBI, and U.S. Attorneys' Offices around the country also play instrumental roles in supporting victims throughout the criminal justice process and coordinating between NGOs and law enforcement to both enhance the lives of trafficking victims and strengthen investigations and prosecutions.

The collaboration among these diverse partners has been critical to the development of the victim-centered approach that has characterized the TVPA decade. The increasingly strong partnerships between law enforcement and victim advocates have begun transforming law enforcement culture to allow authorities to identify human trafficking victims in segments of our community historically too marginalized and alienated to seek the protections of the law. Working together, we have made significant strides toward recognizing the fear, shame, trauma, and distrust that have too often kept victims hidden in the shadows, and we have advanced in our understanding of how to earn the trust of traumatized victims.

Looking Forward: The Next Decade and Beyond

For all these broad-based efforts and advances over the past decade, we are determined to continue strengthening our efforts to bring the full force of Justice to bear in the fight to end human trafficking.

While we have seen marked increases in the numbers of human trafficking prosecutions over the last decade, we continue to identify ways to bring justice to more human trafficking victims. To this end, as we commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the TVPA, we will be introducing new enhanced enforcement initiatives, developed through the leadership of the interagency Federal Enforcement Working Group and the Attorney General's Advisory Committee of United States Attorneys. These initiatives will significantly strengthen the federal law enforcement response to human trafficking crimes, both within the Department and across federal law enforcement agencies.

These initiatives will include coordination protocols to increase collaboration within the Department among the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, United States Attorneys' Offices nationwide, and the Department's subject matter experts in HTPU and CEOS, ensuring that we are effectively leveraging cutting-edge expertise to strengthen each and every human trafficking investigation and prosecution.

In addition, these initiatives will include a critical interagency component, centered around the launch of interagency federal law enforcement teams in select pilot districts nationwide. These teams, which will be comprised of Assistant U.S. Attorneys and federal agents from ICE, FBI, and DOL, will operate under the leadership of the United States Attorney for the relevant federal judicial district and the Special-Agent-in-Charge or District Director of each of the constituent federal investigative agencies. The teams will execute a coordinated, proactive strategy to strategically leverage the assets of each federal enforcement agency, target enforcement efforts at identified human trafficking threats, and develop high-impact federal human trafficking investigations and prosecutions.

Each pilot team will operate not only under the leadership of the federal agencies in the jurisdiction, but also in close coordination with the interagency Federal Enforcement Working Group of human trafficking subject matter experts from ICE, FBI, and DOL headquarters, DOJ, and the Executive Office of United States Attorneys.

Experience with the Human Trafficking Task Force Initiative, which since 2004 has issued grants to local law enforcement agencies, has demonstrated the critical importance of partnerships, coordination, and multi-disciplinary responses. The forthcoming new initiatives will bring more effective coordination to federal human trafficking investigations and prosecutions by introducing streamlined interagency criminal enforcement structures coordinating federal criminal investigations and prosecutions, both among enforcement agencies, and between law enforcement teams in the field and their agency headquarters.

These forthcoming initiatives are being designed to build upon the success of the Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force, first convened in 1998, that catalyzed early interagency coordination efforts. The TVPA has significantly expanded upon early interagency coordination efforts, creating the Senior Policy Operating Group, chaired by the State Department's GTIP Office, to coordinate among the many government agencies addressing diverse dimensions of human trafficking, domestically and internationally. As both government-wide anti-trafficking efforts generally and criminal enforcement efforts specifically continue to grow, our determination to punish and deter traffickers more vigorously than ever calls for a specialized federal law enforcement initiative focused exclusively on building high-impact federal criminal investigations and prosecutions to hold traffickers accountable for their crimes. The introduction of more coordinated federal law enforcement structures will more effectively leverage each federal agency's anti-trafficking resources, serving as a force multiplier that will enhance performance and allow us to take our fight against human trafficking to the next level as we move into the second decade of enforcing the TVPA.

The right to individual freedom is among the most fundamental and inviolable guarantees enshrined in our Constitution. In the decade since passage of the TVPA, we as a nation have made great strides in the struggle to end human trafficking. But until we can truly relegate modern-day slavery to its rightful place in the past, alongside other shameful episodes in our nation's history, we will continue to make the fight against human trafficking a top criminal justice priority. We will continue to strengthen our partnerships and redouble our efforts to give victims a voice, bring traffickers to justice, and dismantle human trafficking networks.

The Department of Justice looks forward to continuing to work with its partners across the federal, state, local, and international governments, and with non-governmental organizations nationwide and worldwide, to continue building on the progress of the past decade, and to make our anti-trafficking efforts more effective than ever before.