



January 2024

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## What's New With Blue

### #TacklingTrafficking Is a Collective Effort. Help Blue Campaign Throughout January and Beyond.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Center for Countering Human Trafficking's (CCHT) Blue Campaign would like to thank all who participated in [#WearBlueDay](#). You showed your support for victims and survivors of human trafficking, and in doing so, stated your

commitment to help end the crime in the United States and abroad. For the remainder of the month, the Campaign will be highlighting our latest resources on social media using the hashtag [#TacklingTrafficking](#). Follow us ([@DHSBlueCampaign](#) on [X](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#)) for free awareness tools that you can share online, with your friends and family, and in your workplace and community. [#TacklingTrafficking](#) is a team effort, and Blue Campaign needs your help in combating this despicable crime.



- [Indicators of human trafficking](#): Learn what human trafficking looks like and how to report it.

- [Community toolkits](#): Learn how you can respond to potential human trafficking in your community or industry.
- [Awareness videos](#): Decipher between sex and labor trafficking, find out how young people can become targeted, and more.
- [Downloadable resources](#): Browse Blue Campaign's comprehensive library of anti-human trafficking materials.

## Human Trafficking Prevention Month Events

### Registration Still Open for Spanish and Continued Presence Webinars

Blue Campaign invites you to attend its free webinar, "From Awareness to Action: Recognizing and Reporting Human Trafficking." Learn how to best recognize and report potential cases of human trafficking and hear from Blue Campaign leaders as they discuss what human trafficking is, indicators of potential human trafficking, common misconceptions, how traffickers operate, and available resources. Registration for one WebEx session remains open:

- [Register for Session 2](#) (Spanish): Tuesday, January 16, 2024, 2 – 3 p.m. EST

### Continued Presence Webinar for the Public

On January 16, 2023, at 3:30 pm, CCHT will host a webinar on Continued Presence (CP) for non-governmental organizations, service providers, and the public. The webinar will focus on explaining CP and the victim-centered approach by referencing the [Continued Presence Resource Guide](#) and outlining the request process, applicant eligibility and application requirements, and recent improvements to the program.

Registration for this webinar is open now and can be found at [this link](#).

*Continued Presence is a temporary immigration designation provided to individuals identified by law enforcement as trafficking victims who may be potential witnesses. CP allows trafficking victims to lawfully remain in the U.S. temporarily and work during the investigation into the human trafficking-related crimes committed against them and during civil action under 18 U.S.C. § 1595 by the victims against their traffickers.*

We look forward to your attendance!

## CCHT Corner

### CCHT Releases Countering Human Trafficking Year in Review, Hosts DHS-wide and Public Training Events during HTPM



In recognition of Human Trafficking Prevention Month (HTPM), CCHT is coordinating three efforts in January aimed at educating DHS employees and the public on human trafficking and Continued Presence, and highlighting Department-wide counter-trafficking efforts:

The annual *Countering Human Trafficking: Year in Review* will be released later this month. The report highlights many of DHS's efforts during the last fiscal year to enhance screening and identification of victims, improve protection and assistance to victims, advance investigations and enforcement actions, and refine training, outreach, and engagement. It also contains links to publicly available reports, resource guides, public awareness materials, program descriptions, press releases, and more. Look for the report towards the end of this month on the [CCHT landing page](#) at dhs.gov.

The third annual DHS CCHT Virtual Human Trafficking Seminar will take place on January 17 and 18. The seminar is open to all DHS personnel, with hundreds of DHS special agents, officers, program managers, analysts, victim assistance specialists, forensic interviewers, and others expected to attend. The seminar will educate DHS employees on prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership as they relate to countering human trafficking.

## From the Field

### HSI New England Investigation with CCHT Assistance Results in Conviction for Sex Trafficking, Obstruction of Prosecution

An investigation by the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Portland, Maine, office resulted in the [conviction](#) of a 32-year-old Boston man for sex trafficking of a young woman and obstruction of a sex trafficking prosecution. In December, Ricardo Middleton was found guilty of sex trafficking a 25-year-old woman and, while detained pending trial, of instructing a co-defendant not to incriminate him.

Middleton targeted a 25-year-old woman with a heroin addiction who was living in South Portland, Maine, compelling her to engage in commercial sex using drugs, lies, intimidation, physical violence, and rape as means to control her. In November 2015, Middleton and co-defendants Sherry Jones and Mathew Thatcher transported the victim to several locations in Maine and Massachusetts. Along the way, Middleton berated the victim, slapping and punching her, and throwing pennies at her when she asked to buy food. The victim testified to how the defendant raped her and told her that he was “going to make a lot of money off” her.

“Middleton and his collaborators treated their victims like property, exploiting their addiction and using horrific violence to ensure compliance. He further attempted to silence those who were prepared to testify against him, but after today’s guilty verdict, Middleton is facing a significant sentence in federal prison, far away from those he’s victimized,” said Special Agent in Charge Michael J. Krol of the HSI New England Field Office. “I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the survivor who made her voice heard, reliving what were surely some of the most terrifying moments of her life. HSI will never cease in its mission to investigate human traffickers and help survivors find the support they deserve to begin a new life with dignity.”

The HSI New England Field Office, Office of the Portland Resident Agent in Charge investigated the case, with assistance from the Biddeford, Portland, South Portland, Topsham, and Saco, Maine Police Departments. The DHS Center for Countering Human Trafficking provided support for the investigation.

Prior to the defendant’s trial, Jones pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit sex trafficking, and Thatcher pleaded guilty to interstate travel in aid of racketeering. All three defendants

will be sentenced at a later date. Middleton faces a mandatory minimum penalty of 15 years and a maximum penalty of life in prison.

For more information visit the [Blue Campaign](#)

To report suspected human trafficking: 1-866-347-2423

To get help from the National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888

or text HELP or INFO to BeFree (233733)