

# GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO COMBAT CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION LEADS TO 303 ARRESTS

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303 people suspected of distributing and producing child sexual exploitation material online were arrested as a result of Operation Atlas, a global initiative conducted with the participation of 10 Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT) members: the Australian Federal Police (AFP), Colombian National Police, Dutch National Police (DNP), Cybercrime Coordination Unit of Switzerland, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Korean National Police Agency (KNPA), New Zealand Police, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the United Arab Emirates Ministry of the Interior and the United Kingdom's National Crime Agency (NCA). A further 106 victims were identified as a result of this global initiative.

Operation Atlas was supported by Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3), member of the VGT since 2011, which provided its analytical expertise in investigating Peer-to-peer (P2P) networks. As highlighted in the 2015 Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment, EC3's flagship annual publication, P2P file sharing methods remain the main platform to access child abuse material and the principal means for non-commercial distribution. The volume of material exchange on P2P platform, and the rate of its growth, represent a serious challenge for law enforcement and can leave devastating impacts upon victims.

Fernando Ruiz, Head of Operations at Europol's European Cybercrime Centre said: "The success of Operation Atlas further exemplifies the reasons why the European Cybercrime Centre continues to be an active participant and supporter of the Virtual Global Taskforce. This partnership is crucial to get a collective response from the representatives of society, the decision-makers, law enforcement, private sector and NGOs to tackle this crime."

In addition, EC3 has recently produced an update of the 2012 Environmental Scan of Child Sexual Exploitation Online report, commissioned by the VGT Board of Management. This report aims to identify new or emerging threats, and focuses on social, technical, legislative and organisational developments that may influence the online sexual exploitation of children in the future.

The report will be made available shortly on the VGT's website: [www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com](http://www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com)

The Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT) is an international alliance of law enforcement and private sector agencies dedicated to combating online child sexual exploitation and other forms of transnational child sexual exploitation across the digital divide.

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