



PRESS RELEASE

# The Department of Justice Announces Significant Enforcement and Expansion Efforts to Dismantle Transnational Human Smuggling and Trafficking Networks

Thursday, September 4, 2025

For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

Today, the Department of Justice announced recent enforcement actions by Joint Task Force Alpha (JTFA) to combat human smuggling and trafficking networks that undermine U.S. national security and public safety. In addition to these actions, the Department also announced the expansion of JTFA to districts along our northern and maritime borders to further dismantle cartels and Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) operating in those regions.

“This Department of Justice is investigating and prosecuting human smuggling more aggressively than ever before, and Joint Task Force Alpha is the tip of the spear,” said U.S. Attorney General Pamela Bondi. “We will not rest until those who profit from the suffering of vulnerable people — including many unaccompanied children — face severe, comprehensive justice.”

“Joint Task Force Alpha has shown the power of bringing together prosecutors, agents, and international partners to target and dismantle some of the most dangerous criminal networks,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew R. Galeotti of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division. “By elevating and expanding JTFA, we are extending that reach across both our northern and southern borders and sending a clear message to cartels and transnational criminal organizations: the Department of Justice will relentlessly pursue those who endanger human life through smuggling and trafficking activities, and we will not stop until these groups are eliminated.”

Today in the Middle District of Florida, Department officials highlighted major developments in recent days in four significant JTFA prosecutions: first, a superseding [indictment](#) in the Middle District of Florida charging defendants allegedly involved in a large alien smuggling ring; second, an [indictment](#) in the District of Vermont charging an alleged human smuggler who operated at the northern border; third, the [extradition](#) from Guatemala to the Southern District of Texas of three defendants allegedly involved in a human smuggling mass-casualty event and lastly, on Aug. 30, two individuals were arrested in El Paso and two Mexican nationals were [charged](#) for their roles in a scheme to smuggle children from Mexico into the United States, sometimes using candy laced with THC to sedate them during smuggling events.

## Expanding Joint Task Force Alpha

JTFA’s mission will expand to regions along the country’s Northern border, including U.S. Attorneys’ Offices for the Northern District of New York and District of Vermont, as well as additional resources along the southern border with prosecutors from the Southern District of Florida. These offices will join forces with the Southern District of California, District of Arizona, District of New Mexico, and Western and Southern Districts of Texas, that already have prosecutors and resources dedicated to JTFA efforts. These offices and personnel are partnered with a whole-of-Department network of expert prosecutors and other support personnel from numerous components of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division and elsewhere, led by the Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section and supported by the Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section; the Office of Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT); the Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section; the Office of Enforcement Operations; the Office of International Affairs; and other sections within the Criminal Division, National Security Division, and Civil Division.

JTFA will also deepen its partnership with federal law enforcement agencies, adding new partnerships with the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to its existing partnership with the Department of Homeland Security and its components.

Given JTFA’s experience and expertise in handling large-scale smuggling cases, U.S. Attorneys’ Offices will now consult with JTFA on all significant human smuggling and trafficking matters to ensure all available Department resources are utilized for the highest priority cases. This will include prosecutions of those who engage in the abuse and exploitation of unaccompanied alien children, who are brought across the border without a parent or guardian and often fall prey to smuggling, sex trafficking, sexual assault, and forced labor.

## Joint Task Force Alpha Successes

JTFA's hallmark achievement in 2025 has been the announcement of the first material support of terrorism charges brought against a CJNG cartel member. On May 16, the Justice Department announced the unsealing of an indictment in the Western District of Texas charging Mexican national Maria Del Rosario Navarro-Sanchez with conspiracy to provide and attempting to provide grenades to CJNG, a designated foreign terrorist organization. Additionally, Navarro-Sanchez is charged with conspiracy to smuggle and transport aliens in the United States, straw purchasing and trafficking in firearms, bulk cash smuggling conspiracy, and conspiracy to possess a controlled substance with intent to distribute. Two other Mexican nationals were also charged with offenses involving alien smuggling, firearms trafficking, and drug trafficking.

Additionally, JTFA has achieved substantial sentences this year, in part due to its focus on prosecuting the most complex smuggling cases involving grave, egregious misconduct. In June 2025, in a JTFA-supported case out of the Western District of Texas, prosecutors obtained sentences of life in prison and 83 years in prison, respectively, for two defendants responsible for a human smuggling conspiracy that resulted in a 2022 mass casualty in San Antonio, Texas where 47 adults and six children died.

Since its founding, JTFA's work has resulted in more than 410 domestic and international arrests of leaders, organizers, and significant facilitators of alien smuggling; more than 355 U.S. convictions; more than 305 significant prison sentences imposed; and forfeitures of substantial assets.

Updated September 4, 2025


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Press Release Number: 25-908

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