



## HUMAN SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING CENTER

# HUMAN SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING CENTER BACKGROUND FACT SHEET

Section 7202 of the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004* (IRTPA) established the interagency Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC) to achieve greater integration and overall effectiveness in the U.S. Government's enforcement and other response efforts, and work with other nations to address the separate but related issues of human smuggling, human trafficking, and criminal facilitation of clandestine terrorist travel.

### DESCRIPTION

The HSTC is an interagency fusion center and information clearinghouse that has three main mission areas: human smuggling, human trafficking, and criminal facilitation of clandestine terrorist travel. Human smuggling and terrorist travel facilitation threaten U.S. national security; human trafficking is a serious human rights issue not only globally, but also in the United States. The HSTC is unique among U.S. organizations in that it concentrates on illicit travel globally.

The HSTC brings together experienced law enforcement, intelligence, and diplomacy specialists from U.S. agencies to work together full time to convert intelligence into effective law enforcement, policy, and diplomatic actions.

### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 7202 of the IRTPA, which provides the legislative framework for the HSTC, states that the HSTC will:

Serve as a clearinghouse with respect to all relevant information from all Federal Government agencies in support of the United States strategy to prevent separate, but related, issues of clandestine terrorist travel and facilitation of migrant smuggling and trafficking of persons.

Ensure cooperation among all relevant policy, law enforcement, diplomatic, and intelligence agencies of the Federal Government to improve effectiveness and to convert all information available to the Federal Government relating to clandestine terrorist travel and facilitation, migrant smuggling, and trafficking of persons into tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence that can be used to combat such illegal activities.

### FUNCTIONS

To accomplish the requirements in Section 7202 of the IRTPA, the HSTC has the following five main functional areas.

**FACILITATE THE BROAD DISSEMINATION OF ALL-SOURCE INFORMATION.** The HSTC is an intelligence/law enforcement/diplomacy fusion center and information clearinghouse that integrates and disseminates raw and finished tactical and strategic intelligence and information to U.S. member agencies' operational components, U.S. policy makers, and appropriate foreign partners. This

intelligence provides actionable leads for U.S. law enforcement and border security agencies that result in criminal investigations and prosecutions of smugglers and traffickers, as well as interceptions of smuggled individuals.

**PREPARE STRATEGIC, AND TARGET ASSESSMENTS.** The HSTC prepares assessments and briefings on important aspects of human smuggling, human trafficking, and criminal facilitation of clandestine terrorist travel. The HSTC's annual vulnerabilities strategic assessment of the United States and foreign travel system provides policy makers with accurate, objective analysis about threats, vulnerabilities, and opportunities for appropriate action. Strategic assessments provide analysis on smuggling and trafficking schemes, patterns, and trends; the use of fraudulent travel documents; U.S. and international progress in dismantling criminal organizations; and proven law enforcement and other approaches for countering smuggling and trafficking. Target assessments focus on specific smuggling and trafficking organizations, networks, and individuals for U.S. law enforcement agencies to use for planning investigations. Customers include U.S. Government agencies such as the Departments of State, Justice, and Homeland Security, the National Security Council, and the U.S. Congress.

**IDENTIFY ISSUES FOR INTERAGENCY COORDINATION OR ACTION.** The HSTC identifies issues of human smuggling and trafficking, whether foreign or domestic, and the global criminal facilitation of clandestine terrorist travel for examination, investigation, legislation, or other actions. The HSTC makes recommendations for referral to relevant agencies or interagency organizations for action, as appropriate.

**COORDINATE SELECT INITIATIVES AND PROVIDE OTHER SUPPORT.** The HSTC coordinates domestic and international anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking initiatives, upon the request of relevant participating U.S. agencies. These initiatives include bilateral or multilateral activities against smuggling networks, and intelligence support to law enforcement. The multi-agency nature of the HSTC allows for a greater level of neutrality, which helps to defuse conflicts between competing agencies.

**EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND COLLABORATE WITH ALLIED FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS.** The HSTC serves as a centralized U.S. point of contact for similar allied foreign centers, multi-national organizations, and national law enforcement and intelligence authorities that combat international illicit travel. The HSTC actively exchanges information with allies and partners regarding human smuggling, human trafficking, and terrorist mobility. Partners include EUROPOL, FRONTEX, INTERPOL, and UNODC.

## **INTERAGENCY COMMUNITY**

The HSTC is a voluntary joint venture of its participating agencies to provide support and information to the appropriate Federal, state, and local governments and law enforcement, and to the intelligence community. The Departments of State (Diplomatic Security), Justice (FBI), Homeland Security (Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, Transportation Security Administration), and other U.S. agencies participate in and staff the HSTC. The HSTC is a support organization and does not have directive authority.

## **CONTACT**

Please direct any information, questions, or comments regarding this fact sheet to:



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