

# EXHIBIT 9

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## Over half of online recruitment in active sex trafficking cases last year occurred on Facebook, report says

By Elizabeth Elkind

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The majority of online recruitment in active sex trafficking cases in the U.S. last year took place on Facebook, according to the Human Trafficking Institute's 2020 Federal Human Trafficking Report.

"The internet has become the dominant tool that traffickers use to recruit victims, and they often recruit them on a number of very common social

networking websites," Human Trafficking Institute CEO Victor Boutros said on CBSN Wednesday. "Facebook overwhelmingly is used by traffickers to recruit victims in active sex trafficking cases."

Active cases include those in which defendants were charged in 2020, as well as those in which defendants were charged in previous years and charges were still pending in trial last year or the case was on appeal.

Data from the last two decades included in the human trafficking report showed that 30% of all victims identified in federal sex trafficking cases since 2000 were recruited online.

In 2020 in the U.S., 59% of online recruitment of identified victims in active cases took place on Facebook alone. The report also states that 65% of identified child sex trafficking victims recruited on social media were recruited through Facebook.

The tech giant responded to the report's findings in a statement to CBS News: "Sex trafficking and child exploitation are abhorrent and we don't allow them on Facebook. We have policies and technology to prevent these types of abuses and take down any content that violates our rules."

"We also work with safety groups, anti-trafficking organizations and other technology companies to address this and we report all apparent instances of child sexual exploitation to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children," the statement said.

Instagram and Snapchat were the most frequently cited platforms after Facebook for recruiting child victims in 2020. For adult victims, the next-most cited were WeChat and Instagram.

The annual report uses data from every active federal criminal and civil human trafficking case over the last year, but 2020's featured an expanded scope.

"This report actually looks at the last 20 years of trends in the federal government," Boutros said.

The report revealed that children accounted for 53% of identified victims in active criminal human trafficking cases in 2020, and women made up a large majority. Forty-four percent of victims of sex trafficking were women, and half were girls.

While the internet has been the most common place of recruitment since 2013, including 41% of active cases in 2020, the street, stores and cults were also cited by the group as targets of human traffickers.

Researchers note that trends also reflect the DOJ's methods of tracking down cases.

"These data do not reflect the prevalence of online solicitation in sex trafficking schemes beyond those federally prosecuted. To be sure, the internet is implicated in many sex trafficking situations, but the high numbers of federal prosecutions involving internet solicitation are equally if not more reflective of the strategies law enforcement use to investigate these crimes," the report states.

The majority of victims in active sex trafficking cases in 2020 were targeted with a fraudulent job offer, the report notes, followed by feigned romance. The data is based on the 602 victims identified in active sex trafficking cases for whom details of their recruitment were known.

"Traffickers often prey on existing vulnerabilities of victims," Boutros said. "A lot of times we imagine that traffickers are these large group syndicates or networks,

exploiting a huge number of victims. But actually most traffickers are not operating as an organized crime enterprise. It is mostly individual traffickers that are operating individually and often exploiting a small handful of victims at a time."

*Editor's Note: This story has been updated to correct a statistic on child victims.*

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