



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DOJ OIG Releases Report on the FBI's Efforts to Notify Victims of Child Sexual Abuse Material

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a report examining the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) notification of child victims of sexual abuse material.

The DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that victims and their guardians are generally notified when they are first victimized in a case involving sexual abuse material. However, we found that when those images were found in subsequent investigations, the FBI did not consistently notify these child victims and their guardians or advise them of their rights if their images were in more than one investigation. Instead, victims were only notified again when their images were considered "actively traded" by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), which was originally understood by the FBI to mean when the abusive images have been seen in five or more different cases. We believe federal law and the Attorney General Guidelines dictate that victims are to be notified in every case in which they are victimized. By failing to notify victims or their guardians of subsequent victimizations under this actively traded threshold, an unknown number of victims were potentially denied certain victim rights such as the preparation of a victim impact statement, possible restitution, and the opportunity to reconsider their notification preferences.

We also found that the FBI maintained an inefficient and incomplete tracking system that kept some victims from being properly notified. Further, the FBI did not accurately portray its victim notification process on its website. Accurate public information is essential, especially as it pertains to victims of crimes involving child sexual abuse material.

Today's report contains six recommendations intended to improve victim notification processes and ensure the accuracy of publicly available information from the FBI. The FBI concurred with all of the recommendations.

Report: Today's report is available on the OIG's website at the following link:
<https://oig.justice.gov/reports/audit-federal-bureau-investigations-efforts-notify-victims-child-sexual-abuse-material>

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