OPERATION WASP NEST

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OPERATION WASP NEST

- 25th February 2015, Danish Police in coordination with the Danish Anti-Trafficking Centre raided 64 locations and arrested 98 persons

- A unique because:
  - First case of trafficking for the purpose of forced criminality
  - New forms of crime and modus (ID theft, fraud etc.)
  - Largest human trafficking case in Denmark
    - 300+ persons exploited, 30+ persons identified as victims of trafficking.
    - 22 persons charged for various crimes.
  - 3-8 years sentences: 15 persons convicted of THB (district court). 5 still pending. 1 abscond prosecution, international arrest warrant. (cases appealed to high court)
  - Most victims were men – new challenges assisting groups of male victims
  - The case is an example of national and international inter-agency cooperation in combating THB, prosecution of traffickers and victim protection.
  - Return and 6 months reintegration assistance within the EU + follow up monitoring
From a theft case to THB, Summer 2014

- Discovered by coincidence by Copenhagen Police
- Case evolved – placed in task force
  - Put their hands into a Wasp Nest
- Several indicators of THB
- NCI THB Expert joins the team
Modus operandi

Step 1: Recruitment & transport

- The mastermind contacts a recruiter (middleman) in Romania.
- The recruiter contacts an vulnerable Romanian person (victim), and offers him a job in Denmark.
- The victim is transported to Denmark.
- The traffickers houses the victim in different parts of Zealand/Denmark.
Modus operandi

Step II: Habouring, housing and registration (ID)

- Placed in cheap houses in the country side. Poor conditions and not maintained by the traffickers.
- Makes sure they have cigarettes and food – then there were no complaints.
- Brings the victim to the municipality, where he, with real identity papers but falsified employment contracts, gets a danish ID (CPR).
Modus operandi

Step III: Deception into various forms of crime

• Then an NEM-ID is received
• With an NEM-ID and an CPR-ID you are a trusted person in Denmark, and it’s possible to have contact online with banks, money lenders, the tax authorities etc.
• Some victims has been escorted to different shops to buy cars, electronic devises
Modus operandi

Step III: Deception into various forms of crime

- The victim is placed as a CEO of a company
- The victim is sent back to Romania without getting a part of the profit – he only gets a small pay.
- Doesn’t live in the house in which he is registered
- Doesn’t know what crime is made in his name.
- Don’t know the real reason why they were brought to Dk
- Recruited from poor areas – few job opportunities
- Promised jobs and opportunities
- Older than 30 years old, none or limited english language skills
NCI
National Center of Investigation

Crimes

• TAX fraud
  – Fake paychecks
• VAT fraud
• Credit companies
  – Vivus
  – Handelsfinans, etc.
  – SMS-loans (credit)
  – Kvik loans (credit)
  – Express bank
  – Santander
  – Trust buddy
  – LO-kort
• Gasolin cards,
  (SHELL, Statoil etc.)
• Maternity payments

• Unemployment insurance
• Car leasing
• Sale of identification for the purpose of buying cars.
  – Insurance Fraud
• Appliances
• Mobile phones (IPhone, HTC etc.)
• Social security payments
• Online shopping.
  – H&M
  – Ellos
  – Urkongerne (watches)
The profit

• Pr. victim (250-300 persons)
  – Aprox. 24,000 Euro if selling credit cards
    – A "roma-package" containing 1 id, 1 private account, 1 company and 1 company account sold for aprox. 6,700 Euro
  – Credit card companies / money lenders
    • up to 20 different companies
    • Between 500 Euro and 6,600 Euro
  – TAX
    • variable but seen up to aprox. 13,200 Euro
    • Est. 1,800,000 Euro

• 5 – 10 cars
  – value up to 35,000 Euro

• Estimation: Fraud for at least 7,200,000 Euro (entire organisation)
Investigation techniques & tools

- Interception (phone tapping) – aprox. 30
- Secret house searches – 2
- Opening of letters – 8
- Open house searches – 60-70
- Orders for 3rd parties to give information – countless.
- Serveillance Teams
The best evidence is statements from the victims
The Organisation
Action day – February 25th 2015

• 387 Police officers all over Denmark
• 64 house searches
• 98 arrests
• 22 middlemen and masterminds
  – 21 in custody
• 76 Victims, all Romanians – aprox. 30+ declared victims of THB by CMM (Centre against human trafficking).
• Multidisciplinary cooperation: Tax department, Immigration service
CMM / Police

- Combining two different tracks
  - Investigate, prosecute and convict the traffickers
  - The victim approach (Victim identification, protection & assistance)
Investigation in Romania - JIT

• THB
  – Recruitment
    • Identify recruiters
    • Identify victims
  – Transport
    • Identify routes
  – Deception
    • Questioning victims

• Find and seize stolen goods, or other profit, generated from the crime
  – Seize houses and valuables
  – Find and seize cars
  – Seize bank accounts
ACTION IN ROMANIA

• 10th of March 2016
• 20 house searches / 20 suspects
• 8 persons arrested
• seized approx. 265,000 EUR
CONVICTIONS

• 2 convictions in District Court
• 15 for THB and organized fraud, tax fraud and data fraud
  • 3 - 7 years and 11 month imprisonment
  • Fraud for the amount between 480.000 - 1.300.000 Euro for a period of 14 month.
• All Romanian (15) has been expelled for life.
• Appeal for High Court.
• Still waiting for the last conviction, which will be in the beginning of July.
Victims ID, Protection & Assistance incl. R&R

• Victims identified by CMM (screening interviews)
• Immediate assistance, - housing etc.
• Assisted voluntary return to Romania
• Reintegration assistance (6months support in home area)
• Monitoring mission & follow-up
GOOD PRACTICES & LESSONS LEARNED

• The complexity of THB (complex new forms of crimes and exploitation)
  Important to pro-active investigations

• Successful Inter-agency cooperation:
  • National: Police, CMM anti-trafficking Centre, Tax authorities, Immigration
    Services, NGO’s
  • International: Romanian Police (JIT), IOM, local NGO (Adpara)

• Need for interagency vigilance /guidelines (observe and report)
  • The importance of THB training to authorities / stakeholders

• Effective victims protection & assistance, also to encourage witness
  statements
THANK YOU

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