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**Written Statement of Proposed Testimony**

**Background**

As a Doctor of Criminal Justice, professor at American Military University, and as a humanitarian I have been researching current trends in human trafficking for several years. This work has led me to in-country research in South America, Central America, and the United States to gain a deeper understanding of human trafficking trends. I have been a guest of INTERPOL and the National Police of Colombia to conduct in-country research on human trafficking originating in Colombia and I have provided human trafficking training to government officials in the United States and Central America to mitigate human trafficking. This training has included training to immigration, the Belize Defense Force, and other law enforcement officials in Belize to counter human trafficking. I have presented research at the International Human Trafficking and Social Justice Conference for two consecutive years on human trafficking trends and have peer-reviewed research published on the topic of human trafficking. I also engage in humanitarian work that involves leading teams to a prison in Central America where I provide training to the prison staff on various aspects of prison management and provide life-skills training to inmates. This has opened the door to hear the perspectives of those who were formally involved in human trafficking to gain unique and in-depth insight. The information presented below is a culmination of in-country research in Latin America involving human trafficking that leads to the Southwest Border and humanitarian work I have conducted in Central America.

**Human Trafficking Trends**

Typically, gangs focus on smuggling drugs and guns. Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) and trafficking groups aid in moving people from around the world through Latin American attempting to come to the United States illegally across the Southwest Border. Human smuggling is transportation based on when someone pays to be smuggled to the United States. Human trafficking, which is labor-based, involves sex trafficking, domestic slavery and forced labor. Being forced into human trafficking can be a consequence of human smuggling.

Economic conditions in Central America and around the world is the biggest factor that drives people to leave their homes and risk their lives to be smuggled across the Southwest Border. People who live in dangerous impoverished conditions spend all of the money that they have and often end up becoming victims of human trafficking through their attempt to come to the United States illegally. This occurs because delays and obstacles along the human smuggling route result in the migrant owing more money than they or their family can afford to pay. Therefore, they are placed into human trafficking as a means to pay off the debt once they arrive at the Southwest Border. This may include sex trafficking, packaging drugs, or other forms of forced labor. There are unspeakable vulnerabilities for migrant children who are forced by armed human traffickers to pay off their debts.

**The Role of Coyotes**

When groups of people are smuggled to the United States, intelligence is collected from within the group. For example, you'll have a coyote [smuggler] mixed with those being transported as part of a smuggling operation for intel purposes. The victims are not aware that the coyote is among them and if the coyote finds that they don't have the money to be smuggled, he will sell them to the traffickers for

sexual exploitation. TCOs exploit people who cannot pay to be transported, and they are sold into the sex trade or forced labor.

### **The Use of Safe Houses**

Safe houses have an important role in human trafficking along the Southwest Border. Safe houses are located both on the Mexican and United States sides of the border. TCOs use local gang members to manage safe houses in both countries. Safe houses can be described as a triangle with three different houses involved in a specific human trafficking ring. The first house is used as a processing center. When a migrant is brought to the border and does not have the money to pay for the transportation costs, the first house will act as a processing center where the person will be stripped of their clothing or personal items and provided different clothing by the gang members managing the safe house. They will typically be photographed and the total payment owed will be listed. It is during this phase that victims are likely to be verbally or physically abused as a form of coercion or to exert control over the victim. Passports and personal belongings are often retained by the trafficker to maintain control over the victim. The victim may be beaten or sexually assaulted. Victims are then moved to a second safe house. Within the second safe house is where the actual exploitation occurs, such as in the case of sex trafficking or drug packaging. The victim will remain at the second house until their debt for transportation to the United States is paid. Once that occurs, the victim will be moved to the third safe house. It is at the third safe house that the victim is provided any clothing and property that was taken at the first safe house. Victims are typically fed and better taken care of at the third safe house. Victims are permitted to remain at the third safe house until their transportation to their final destination can be arranged or they can leave. While being moved between safe houses, victims are blindfolded or other measures are taken to prevent the victim from seeing where the safe houses are located. Safe houses may be disguised as businesses with bedrooms in the back space. Typically at safe houses, security cameras will be used and extend surveillance to nearby intersections so that traffickers can see who may be approaching the safe houses. Reinforced windows are common along with handcuffs, chains, and modifications that include sound proofing. Traffickers may have an escape path developed at the safe house.

TCOs create an illusion that no crime is being committed and instead they are just helping people find a better life since the border system is set up to detect illicit narcotics instead of trafficked people. Many TCOs depend on outlets that aid in the facilitation of human trafficking by providing blanket security for everyone involved through tipping them off of law enforcement operations or other threats to their operations. People are put into place to monitor for threats to the trafficking operation. These connections exist from Central America through Mexico to the United States. Different TCOs have their own outlets that aid in the trafficking process, which exists for both human trafficking and drug trafficking. It is not uncommon for paperwork to be doctored to aid in trafficking people. If given false documentation, travel agencies can arrange travel that appears to be legitimate. For example, a husband and wife may move children from Central America through Mexico to San Diego under the guise that the children accompanying them are their own. Once in the United States, the children may be sold to another family that wants children but does not wish to go through the legal adoption process. Traffickers with these connections easily move people to the United States. Traffickers without these connections are more likely to be those moving people across the desert into the United States.

### **Trafficking Originating in Central America**

In Central America, smugglers will go to the immigration office and will sit there. They can tell where people are from. They will approach them and say, where you trying to go? Someone may say 'L.A.'

The smuggler will say, 'how much money do you have?' The immigrants may say that they have \$2,500 and are trying to get their visa with that money. The smuggler will tell them they can be transported to L.A. for only \$1,000 and they have connections who will smuggle them through Mexico across the U.S. border to San Diego." Once the victim gives the smuggler money, demands are typically made for more money because the smuggler claims that there were unforeseen expenses. If the immigrants don't have a way of getting extra money, then they are sold to human traffickers. If they are women, they are often forced into sex trafficking. If they are men, they are often coerced into forced labor.

Human traffickers in Central America target public squares and migrant shelters. They exploit the vulnerabilities of victims by either promising false work opportunities or use physical force that compels victims to go along with traffickers out of fear that either they or their families will be harmed if they don't cooperate.

Often, human traffickers make threats to harm family members. Those threats compel adult and child victims to remain in the sex trade or other facets of human trafficking.

Also, human traffickers target the areas where migrants have been deported. They know that victims often have lost their money on failed smuggling attempts to the United States and are especially defenseless.

### **Perils of Being Smuggled to the United States**

Human smuggling is extremely dangerous for the people seeking to enter the United States along its southwest border. Smugglers are notorious for placing people in hazardous situations that can result in their deaths. During smuggling operations, women and children are especially at risk. They may suffer different forms of physical and emotional abuse, including rape, beatings, kidnapping and robbery. When migrants are smuggled, they are often exposed to harsh conditions such as unsuitable and overcrowded sleeping accommodations, coercion, deceit, and verbal abuse.

Often, migrants pay the smugglers all of the money that they have for illicit transportation to the United States. Other times, family members already residing in the United States pay smuggler fees for their family members to be smuggled into the country.

### **Human Trafficking Involving Juvenile Organs**

One element of human trafficking that is not well known is organ harvesting. Sadly, part of my humanitarian work in Central America has revealed that there is a market for juvenile organs.

While engaged in humanitarian work at a prison in Central America, I met with a former gang member who today is rehabilitated, but he has spent a significant part of his life in prison. He explained that the reason why organ harvesting has a market is due to buyers' personal needs. For instance, he said that a buyer may "have a family member who is dying, and they will pay anything for their loved one. It is like making a custom order. Organ traffickers view this exploitation as a 'job'."

I asked him how a child becomes a victim of human trafficking. He explained, "if someone does not love their child and allows them to wander on the street, and the trafficker has the opportunity to take them, then he will. If he doesn't, someone else will."

The former gang member spoke of one organ trafficker who operated out of Mexico, Venezuela and the Philippines. This organ trafficker would frequent homeless places, shelters, encampments and drug houses where families camped with their kids. He would offer money to the parents to take the kids out of that environment and would never return with those children.

To the former gang member's knowledge, the last child this organ trafficker kidnapped was 12 years old, and someone paid him \$15,000 for the child's eye. This was several years ago. Moving children from one point to another was easy because the organ trafficker never had to show documentation. He did not receive resistance from the kid because the child's parents had given permission for the child to be with him. They harvested the child's right eye in Mexico.

Human trafficking continues to grow as a global crime due to its profitability. When a drug dealer makes a profit through selling drugs, he has to continually obtain more product to make another sale. In the case of sex trafficking, the same victim can be used repeatedly to make a profit.

Dr. Jarrod Sadulski

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jarrod Sadulski".