



Timeline of Operation Strikeback combating ‘sextortion’

NOVEMBER 2013

During the 1st INTERPOL Eurasian Working Group Meeting in Singapore in November 2013, a presentation by Hong Kong Police and a social networking group highlighted the growing number of ‘sextortion’ cases, with some 440 cases reported in Hong Kong in 2013.

Following the meeting, officers from the INTERPOL Digital Crime Centre (IDCC) met with representatives from the Hong Kong Police Force, Singapore Police Force and the Philippine National Police (PNP) Anti-Cybercrime Group to formulate a joint investigation model to combat sextortion.

DECEMBER 2013

PNP identified and shared information about the ‘Bicol Group’ based in Naga City as being involved in sextortion. More than 100 suspects were linked to this particular syndicate.

JANUARY 2014 – FEBRUARY 2014

Hong Kong Police identified a second network, the ‘Bulacan group’, involved in sextortion cases and operating out of the Philippines.

Investigations identified victims of this group in a number of countries / jurisdictions including Hong Kong (China), Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States. Additional potential victims were also identified in Australia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Korea.

FEBRUARY 2014

Police Scotland officially joined the cybercrime taskforce to combat sextortion, after work with the UK’s National Crime Agency (CEOP command) led to the identification of a criminal network linked to the death of Scottish teenager Daniel Perry.

MARCH 2014

The INTERPOL Digital Crime Centre arranged a 2nd operational meeting in Singapore involving representatives from police and judicial authorities from the Philippines, England, Scotland, Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia. Details of a third organized crime group also based out of the Philippines were presented to the group.

APRIL/MAY 2014

As a result of the intelligence sharing between the involved countries and the private sector, an operation targeting the organized crime groups was mounted in the Philippines on 30 April and 1 May 2014. Raids were conducted at premises in Bicol, Bulacan, Laguna and Taguig City, resulting in the arrest of 58 individuals and the seizure of 250 pieces of electronic equipment.