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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Rescue of 43 Missing Children; Over 300 Children Rescued in 2025

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier announced the successful conclusion of Operation Northern Lights, a multi-agency child recovery operation led by the U.S. Marshals Service in collaboration with Homeland Security Investigations, the Office of the Attorney General, and other law enforcement partners. The operation resulted in 43 children safely located and rescued.

“Our office was honored to partner with U.S. Marshal Greg Lejedal in the Northern District of Florida to rescue 43 missing children, some as young as 18 months old,” **said Attorney General James Uthmeier**. We will bring the strongest charges possible against those who put these kids in harm's way.”

“Operation Northern Lights shows what can be accomplished when agencies work together towards the same goal: protecting our children,” **said Statewide Prosecutor Brad McVay**. “The recoveries made in this operation are the result of the tireless commitment to protecting kids that exists across local, state, and federal agencies.”

The operation from December 1-12, 2025, located missing children and teens in Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi. The victims ranged from 1-17 years old.

As a result of the operation, nine arrests were made, primarily for interference with child custody. Two potential human trafficking cases were identified and are under investigation.

Throughout the operation, the Office of Statewide Prosecution provided continuous legal support, working closely with law enforcement partners to ensure warrants, recoveries, and arrests were conducted lawfully and efficiently.

These investigations are ongoing and charges will be announced as they're filed.

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