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Advocating Against Romance Scammers

ISSUE 10 APRIL-JUNE 2024

The World is Listening!

AARS Presented for the U.N.!

Executive Director of AARS, Kathy Waters, was invited by the United Nations of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to participate in discussions with other experts on organized fraud and its impact on our nation. Focusing on romance scams, as the sole representative from the United States, I shed light on the challenges faced by identity theft victims, the legal constraints in the US concerning social media responsibility, AI ramifications, and the various forms of harm and abuse endured by victims of this crime.

In the upcoming year, more developments will come from these meetings. Rest assured, if able, we will share updates as they become available. It's reassuring to know that dedicated individuals are actively working towards ensuring your safety!



Post on X from the UN against Organized Crime

Progress may be gradual, but efforts are underway to address the concerns of victims and devise effective strategies. Cont...

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Send any questions or comments to: aars@advocatingforu.com

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The World is Listening!

Cont...AARS Presented for the U.N.

One remarkable aspect of the meeting was the collective global interest in addressing this issue for the betterment of society. This week the annual report from the Internet Crimes Complaint Center was released, revealing alarming statistics. Despite this, our legislative system has made minimal efforts to disrupt the primary platform used by cybercriminals and organized crime syndicates – social media companies.

As the sole participant from the US, I highlighted the legal constraints that hinder advocacy, unlike other countries that hold platforms accountable for their content. How much financial loss or human suffering must occur before we acknowledge the need to disrupt the channels used by criminals to perpetrate their crimes through technology? The current law, established twenty-eight years ago to protect internet platforms, inadvertently shields criminals. And as a society, now built around tech, we are fully aware that once you plug it in... it's outdated. Section 230 of the Communication Act is not only outdated, but also a tool to help assist in criminal activity.

The urgency to address these challenges is evident, and collaborative efforts are crucial to combatting cybercrime effectively. It was a great experience and rewarding at that.



UNODC Expert Meeting on Organized Crime Syndicates, March 3, 2024

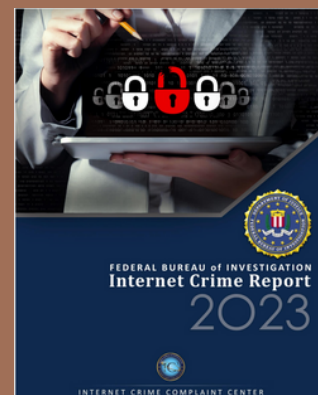
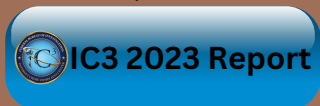
AARS WEBSITE PROVIDES...

1. Where to report a romance scam
2. Educational Resources
3. Social Media safety tips
4. How to identify a romance scammer
5. Stories from Identity Theft Victims
6. The latest advocating from AARS
7. Photo library of pictures used in scams
8. Option of how you can help the cause

Check us out and download your free 1 page UPDATED 2024 "help sheet" on romance scams!

2023 IC3 Numbers are In!

The 2023 Internet Crime Report is now live and the numbers show what we have all predicted. Even though Romance/Confidence Fraud's numbers had a slight decrease, the numbers for investment scams soared. Because there's not an individual category for investment/romance fraud the Pig Butchering scams can all be found under "Investment". Investment fraud in the US, due to the overwhelming rise in Pig Butchering scams, have increased over 3 billion dollars in the past 2 years. You can review the IC3's latest report here:

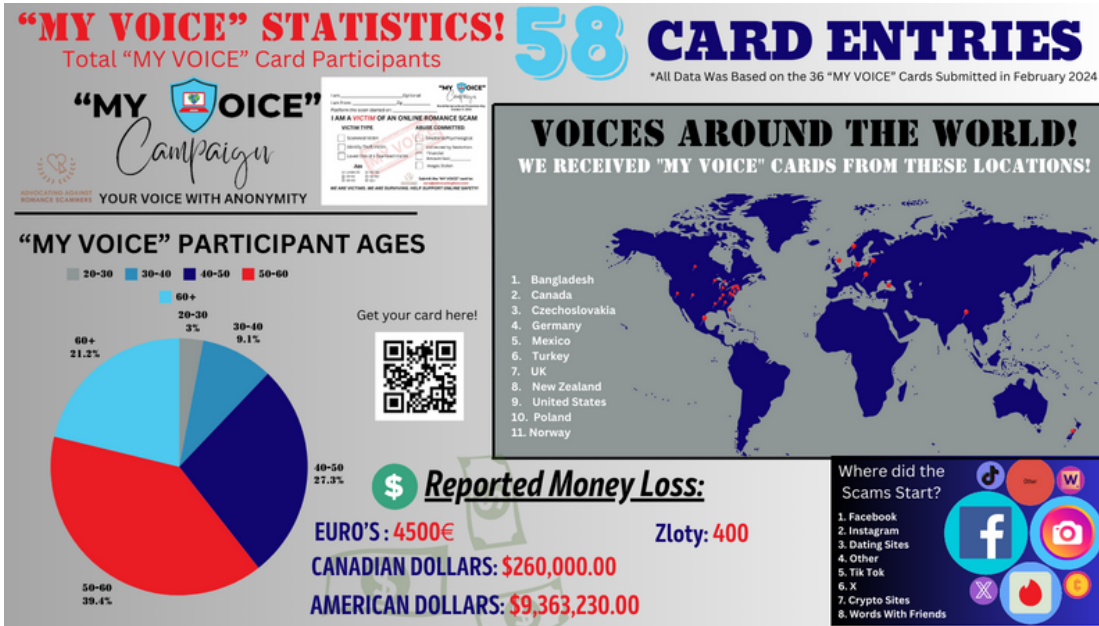


Retrieved from ic3.gov, March 29 2024

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"MY VOICE" STATS



The "MY VOICE" Campaign launched on February 1, 2024, and is set to last until August 31, 2024. By the time our next quarterly newsletter comes out, we will have 3 more updates to share with you! But for now, let's take a look at these alarming stats!

For the month of February and March, we received 58 "MY VOICE" Cards, 43 from scammed victims, 14 from loved ones of victims, and one from an identity theft victim. As you can see from the facts above, Facebook and Instagram held the majority of where the scams initially took place.

The amount of money loss far surpassed what we thought we'd see over a few months. We are looking forward to seeing what the months ahead will bring, and we are looking forward to hand delivering as many "MY VOICE" cards as we can come October 3rd, World Romance Scam Prevention Day! Thank you to all who has already sent cards, and if you haven't yet...there's no time like the present!

A PARTNERSHIP. SAME GOALS. GREAT MATCH



AARS and the BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust have partnered to increase awareness, education, and safety for the online community. AARS shared a link to the BBB Institute's Scam Tracker "free tool anyone can use to report suspected scams. Your reports warn others so they can avoid similar cons." (BBB, <https://www.bbb.org/scamtracker>, 2024)

Last year, AARS's Co-founder Kathy Waters spoke during a webinar hosted by the BBBI about online romance scams alongside the prominent prosecuting attorney for Santa Clara, California, and the founder of Operation Shamrock, Erin West. AARS has maintained a successful partnership with the BBBI for several years, leading to the formalization of their collaboration.

The truth is that teamwork is at the heart of every great achievement.

- John C. Maxwell-

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