



FinCEN Awards Recognize Law Enforcement Success Stories Supported by Bank Secrecy Act Reporting

Category: Transnational Security Threat

The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) holds an annual Law Enforcement Awards ceremony, presenting awards to law enforcement agencies that use Bank Secrecy Act reporting provided by financial institutions in their criminal investigations. The goals of the program are to recognize law enforcement agencies that made effective use of financial institution reporting to obtain a successful prosecution, and to demonstrate to the financial industry the value of its reporting to law enforcement. The program emphasizes that prompt and accurate reporting by the financial industry is vital to the successful partnership with law enforcement to fight financial crime.

The program is open to all Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies and includes six award categories recognizing achievements in combatting significant threats to the integrity of the financial system and the safety of our communities. One of these categories is “Transnational Security Threat.” A brief summary of each 2017 nomination within this category is provided below.

Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

A highly publicized arrest of several ISIL supporters led CBP officials to research the individuals involved. A review of sensitive financial data involving the suspects in this case identified over 50 additional individuals, many of whom were already suspected of having terrorist ties. This financial data included over 1,700 transactions totaling over \$100,000 involving these individuals. Exploitation of this financial data led to the discovery of additional data and identified a network of over 1,600 people transacting nearly \$3 million. This network had nexus to over 80 countries.

Some information collected was shared with domestic and foreign law enforcement partners, resulting in the initiation of several investigations and the identification of one compromised foreign financial institution.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

The FBI conducted an investigation into an individual and his associated companies regarding the production of nuclear material. The subject assisted in the recruitment of U.S.-based nuclear engineers to assist foreign governments in their design and production of nuclear components.

Investigators analyzed a large volume of sensitive financial information to identify accounts and transactions in the name of their primary target. This analysis identified transactions into and out of the United States, the funds for which were determined to be fraudulent or otherwise criminally derived. The financial data revealed a web of fraud and money laundering designed to disguise the illicit funds and the assets purchased with illicit funds.

The FBI's investigation eventually led to the indictment of the primary target and several associated companies. The target later pled guilty to charges relating to the production of nuclear material outside the United States and is facing a sentence of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.