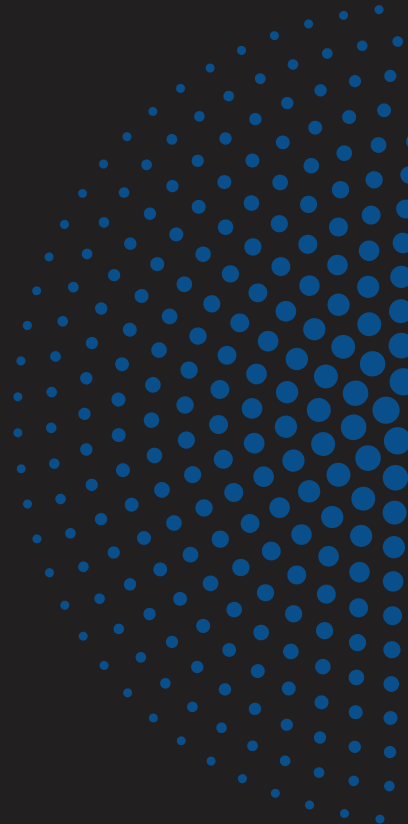




POLARIZATION & EXTREMISM
RESEARCH & INNOVATION LAB
SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Inside the **764** Network

Findings from the PERIL NVE Tracker

June 2026

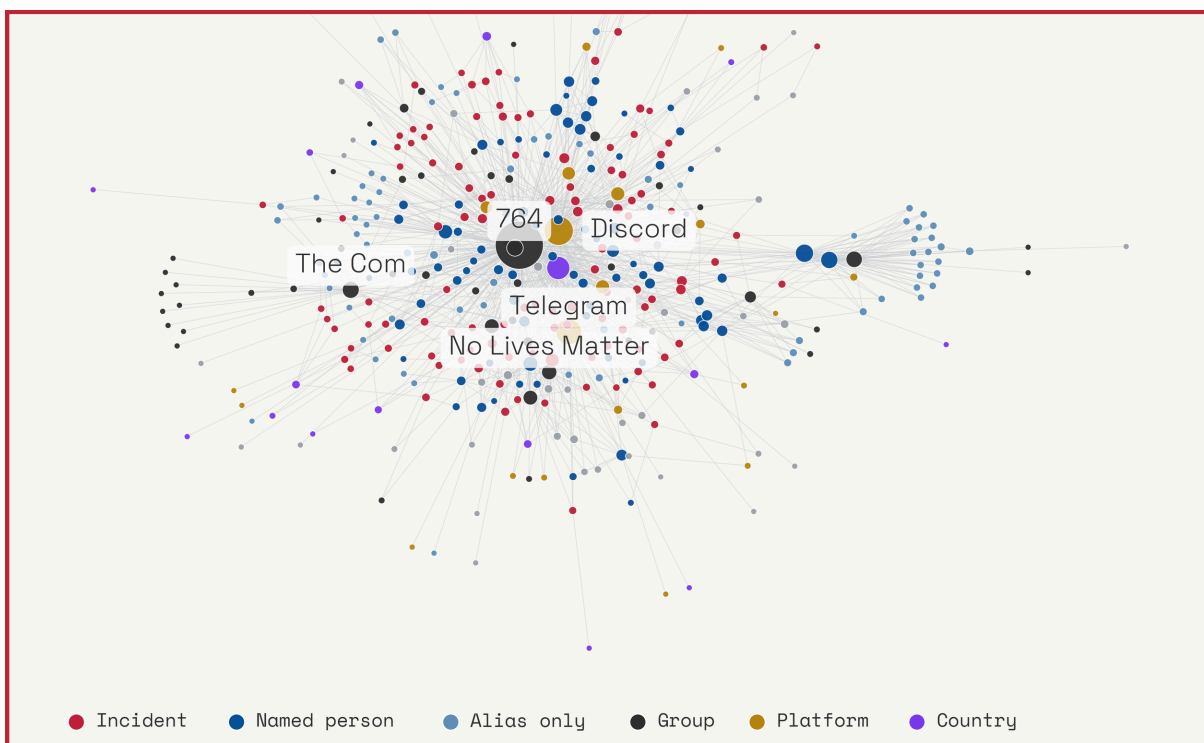


What is 764?

Despite growing concern about the threat of nihilistic violent extremism (NVE), and the 764 network in particular, data on NVE actors and incidents has been in scarce supply. PERIL created the NVE Tracker to better understand the scope and nature of the threat. This report explores some initial findings from the data as they relate to the 764 network, its participants, and their activities.

764 is a decentralized online network that targets children, coercing them into producing exploitative content and engaging in acts of violence, self-harm, and animal cruelty. It sits at the intersection of child exploitation and violent extremism.

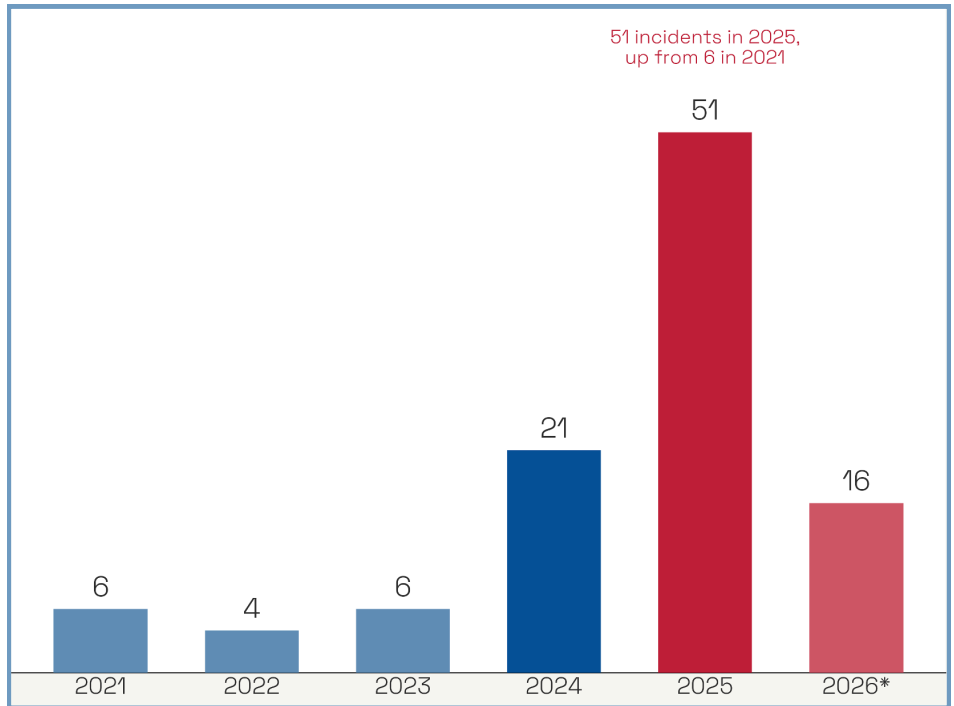
Importantly, 764 is only one group in a broader ecosystem of NVE actors. It is positioned under a broader umbrella network referred to as “The Com” or “The Community”, alongside dozens of splinter and affiliate groups, such as 8884, No Lives Matter, and Maniac Murder Cult. The amorphous, non-hierarchical structure operationalized by NVE actors makes targeting just one group or account ineffective, as the beliefs, content, and members persist in other channels. Additionally, individuals are often members of multiple groups simultaneously, ensuring an expedited spread of materials throughout the network.



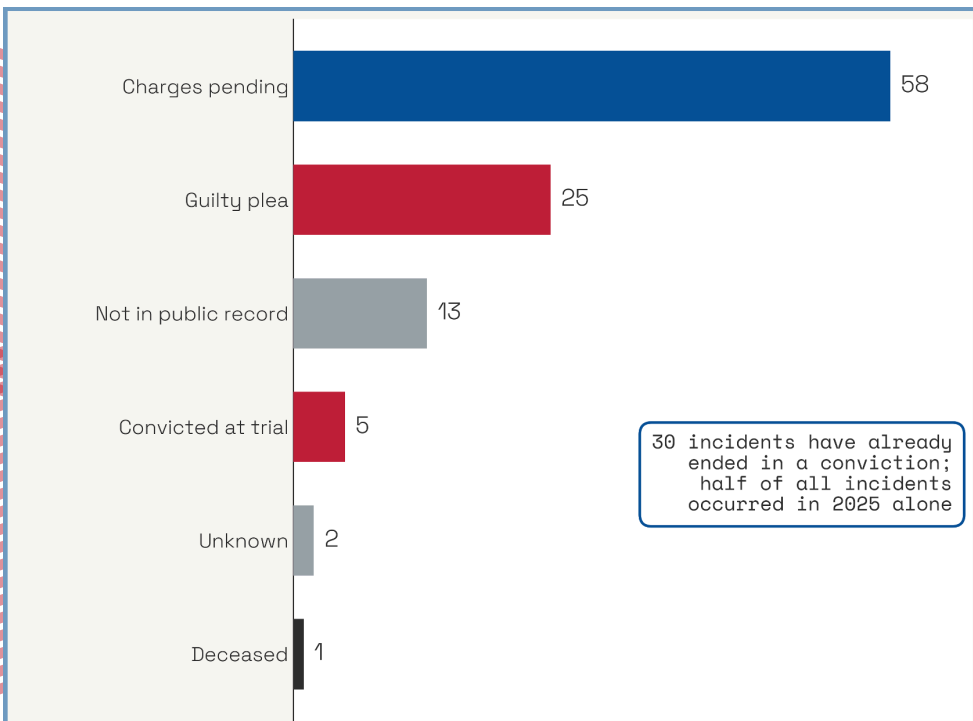
The Growth Curve

PERIL's NVE Tracker has documented 104 incidents linked to the 764 network across 19 countries. After its creation in 2021, the number of arrests connected to the group jumped in 2024, and again in 2025. A surge in 764 activity in 2024 corresponded with the official alliance between 764 and No Lives Matter, another influential NVE group. The groups produced a manifesto, which encourages real-life violence.

The incidents recorded in the PERIL NVE Tracker are only the cases that reached the public record through arrests, indictments, and verified reporting. The real scale is likely much larger, with orders of magnitude more victims who require support. Reporting is especially difficult given the fact that many perpetrators are minors, and information regarding their crimes is limited.



The legal response

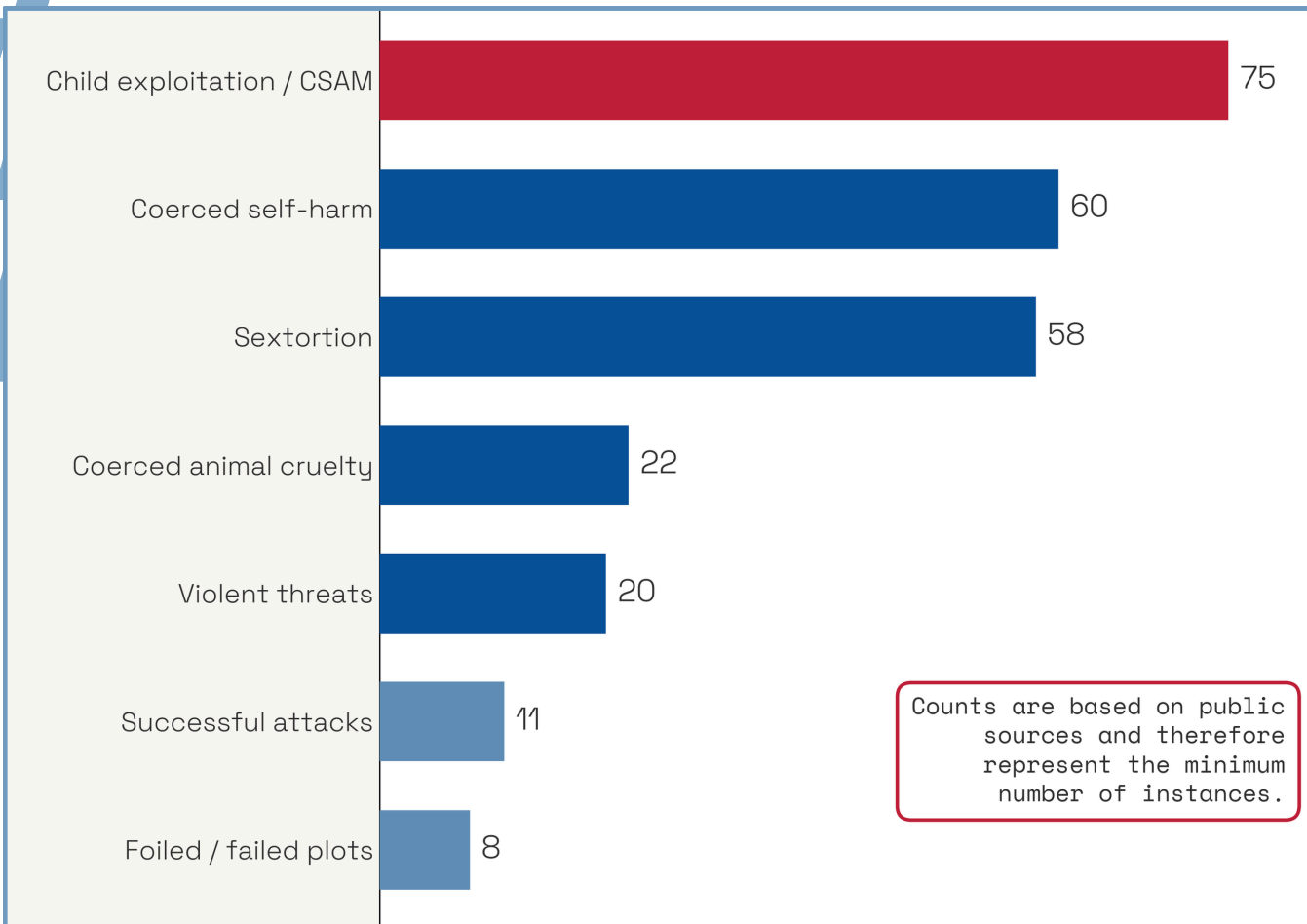


Since the majority of 764-related arrests have occurred in the last two years, many criminal cases are still being prosecuted. Most of the legal cases that have concluded ended in guilty pleas and produced lengthy sentences. Prosecutions involving 764 perpetrators can be complex given the online nature of their crimes and the geographic distribution of victims around the world.

Types of Harm

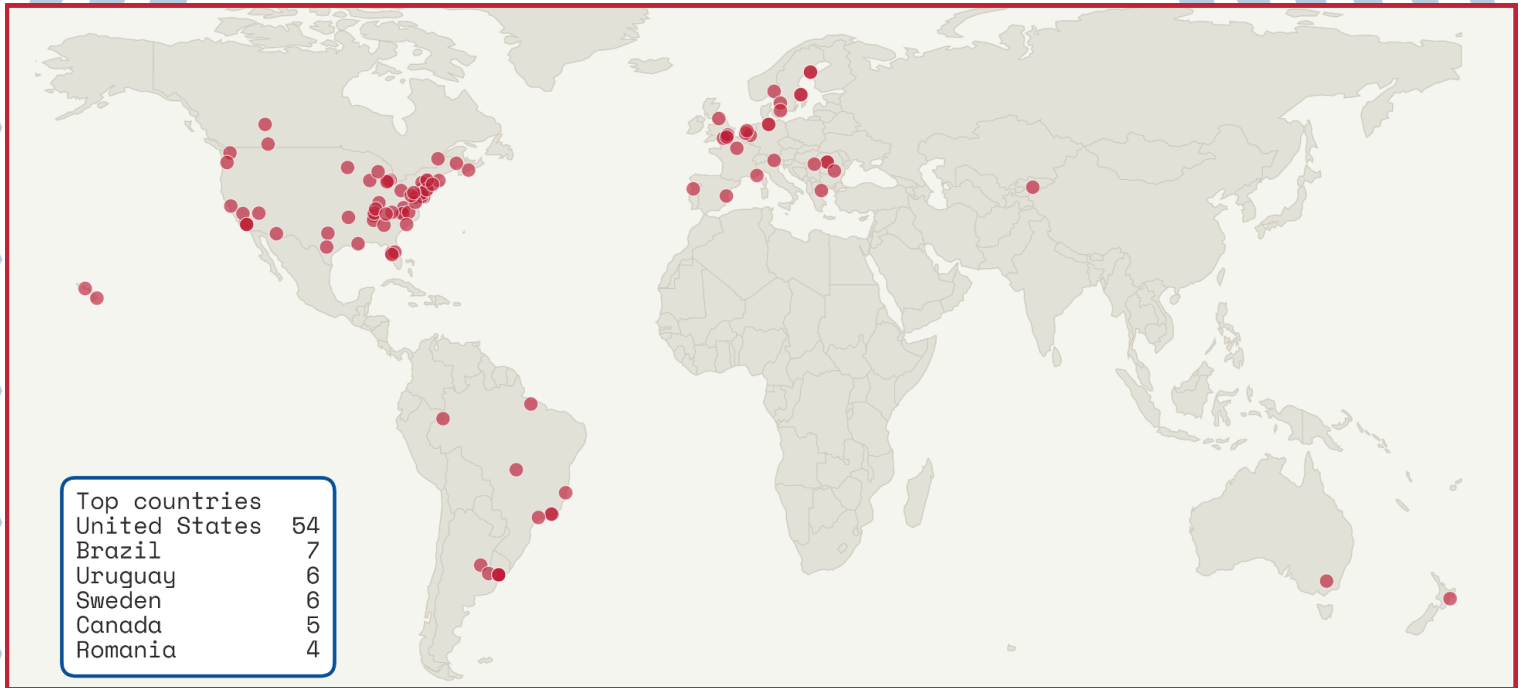
There are several harm types perpetrated by 764 members. The most common is coercing underage victims into producing child sexual abuse material (CSAM), which is then often used to blackmail them into engaging in violence towards themselves and others. 764 perpetrators also exert control over their victims by forcing them to engage in acts of animal cruelty and self harm, such as carving names, numbers, or symbols into their skin to prove loyalty and submission.

Perpetrators linked to 764 have also engaged in threats of physical violence to control their victims. They have used tactics such as “bricking”, which involves throwing a solid object through the window of a victim’s home, signaling knowledge of their physical location.

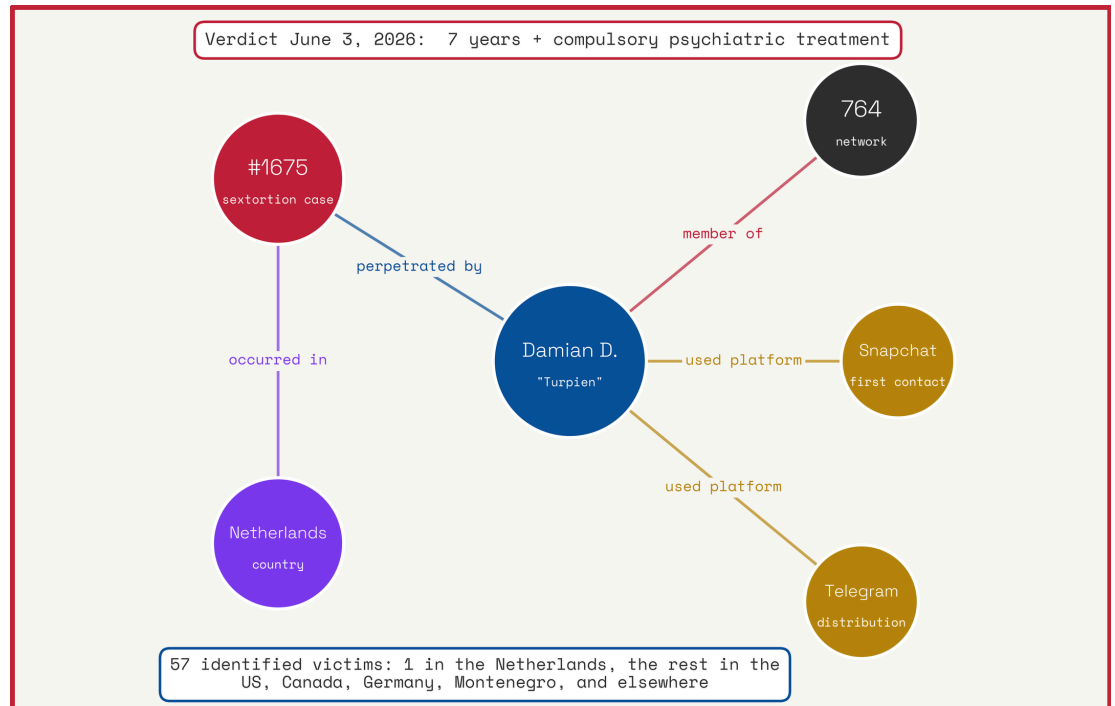


A Global Threat

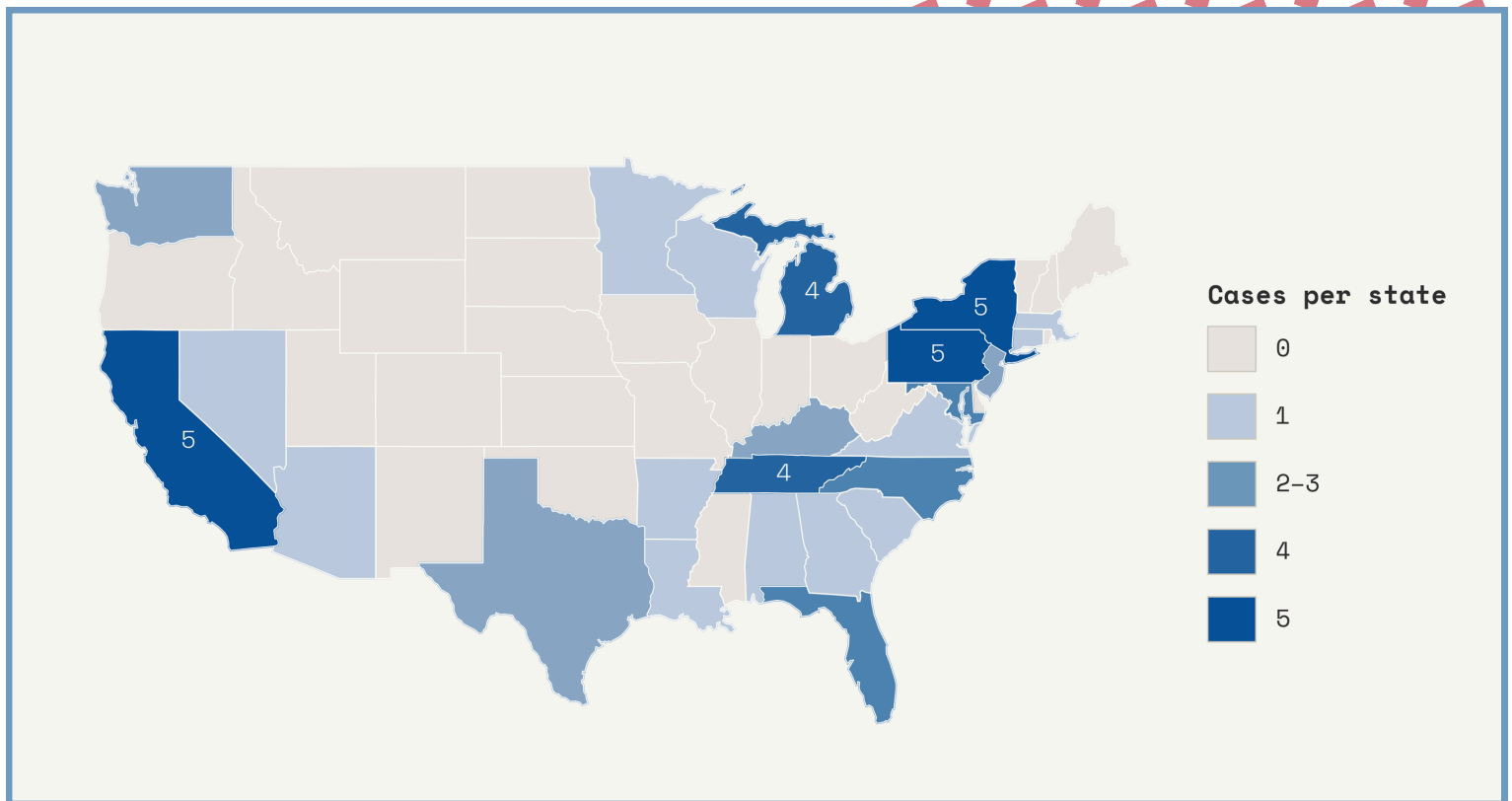
The 764 network is better understood as an ecosystem as opposed to an organized group. Across 104 incidents recorded in the PERIL NVE Tracker, 52 distinct groups were identified, with a third of 764 members having direct links to multiple groups. The threat is international, with perpetrators harming victims across borders and oceans. Cases that are successfully disrupted involve collaboration and information sharing between law enforcement agencies from multiple countries.



A Dutch court recently sentenced a 22-year-old man from Spijkensisse to seven years in prison plus compulsory psychiatric treatment for the online sexual extortion of at least sixty girls aged 13 to 20. The case illustrates how borderless this threat is. The perpetrator never left his house. Of his 57 identified victims, only one lived in the Netherlands. Most were in the United States, with others in Canada, Germany, and Montenegro. The investigation began with a tip from American authorities to Rotterdam police.



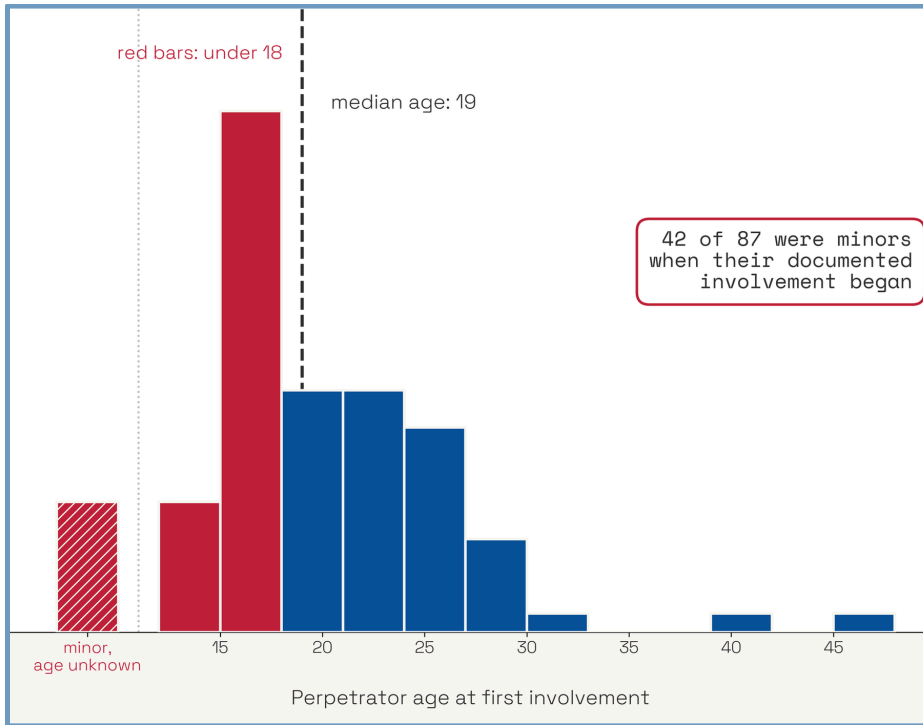
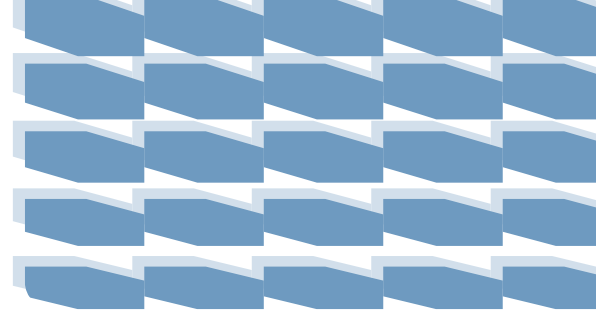
The U.S. Footprint



Fifty-four of the 104 documented cases occurred in the United States, impacting 25 states—half of the country. Pennsylvania, New York, California, Tennessee, and Michigan recorded the highest number of incidents. The online nature of the threat means that harm is not confined to individual states. Perpetrators and their victims are often located in different parts of the country, if not different parts of the world.

764-related incidents in the United States have extended beyond the child exploitation crimes that are common to the network. At least four 764 network members have targeted U.S. schools, including two minor perpetrators who plotted attacks at their own schools and one teen who committed a school shooting. 764 incidents in the United States have also included a bomb plot targeting a busy shopping center and two stabbing attacks on unsuspecting victims.

Who Are The Perpetrators?



Traditionally, perpetrators of online child exploitation have been older adults. The data on those who join networks like 764 challenge this conventional wisdom. In fact, the median perpetrator age in the data is just 19 years old, with the youngest publicly documented perpetrator being 12 years old.

Members of 764 specifically target vulnerable youth, including those with eating disorders, those who have engaged in self-harm, those struggling with mental illness, and LGBTQI+ youth. These individuals may be more vulnerable to manipulative messaging and coercive pressure.

Where the abuse happens

The 764 Relational Network map reveals the connections between 23 platforms and more than 100 crimes linked to 764. Discord and Telegram are by far the most utilized platforms, and are chosen by 764 members due to their end-to-end encrypted messaging, which allows abusers to engage in unsupervised communication with victims and escalate their harms. Before victims are moved to closed servers, however, they are often found on popular gaming and social media platforms, such as Roblox, Instagram, and TikTok. Perpetrators pose as friends or potential romantic partners to gain trust and establish relationships with their victims. Once the connection is formed, they use fear and extortion to pressure victims into producing violent and sexual content.

Documented platform connections use by 764 perpetrators across 104 recorded incidents

Discord	Telegram	Snapchat
61	40	14
Instagram	Roblox	TikTok
13	12	5

Conclusion

Many 764 participants are barely older than their victims, and some began as victims themselves before being groomed into perpetration. Disrupting this emerging threat is not possible by arresting offenders alone. The growing involvement of younger individuals in NVE-related activity amplifies the need for prevention and intervention strategies that can address risks before violence occurs, requiring policymakers to complement, even prioritize, investments in resilience-building, early intervention, and community-based prevention over traditional enforcement approaches.

Behaviors parents and educators should watch for

- > Deep friendships/romantic relationships online with strangers that isolate an individual
- > Hidden accounts or apps, especially encrypted ones
- > Secrecy and visible distress when separated from phones or devices
- > Engagement with violent content and gore online, or communities discussing eating disorders or self harm
- > Sudden withdrawal from schools, friends, and activities
- > Unexplained gifts arriving at the house

Reaching young people, especially but not limited to those who are isolated or struggling, before these manipulative communities do can prevent victimization and in turn, future threats.

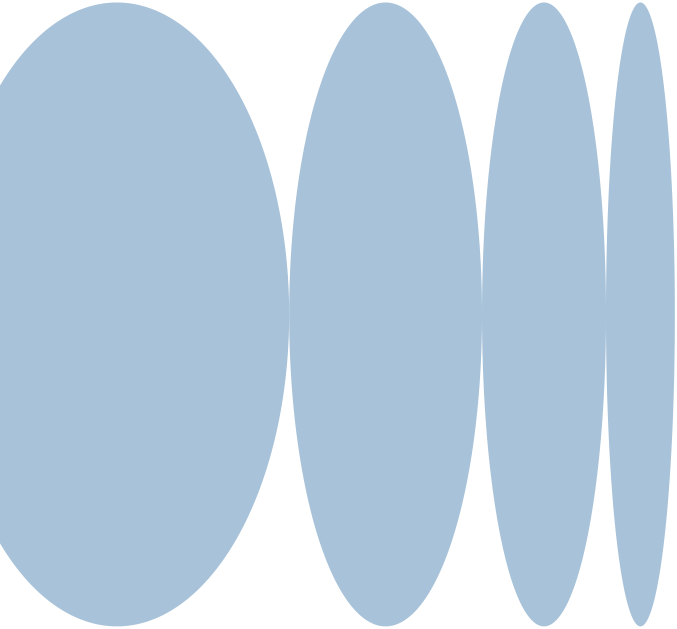
The single most protective message a child can hear:

“If anyone threatens to embarrass or harm you, I have your back. You will not be in trouble, and it is never too late to tell me.”

About PERIL

The Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab (PERIL) is an applied research lab at American University's School of Public Affairs preventing radicalization to violent extremism by strengthening community resilience. We use a public health approach to design, test, and scale up evidence-based tools and strategies that effectively reduce the threat of radicalization to harmful online and offline content including conspiracy theories, mis/disinformation, propaganda, and supremacist ideologies.

As an alternative to security-based approaches that rely on surveillance, censorship, and incarceration, our work takes a multidisciplinary and preventative approach to address hate, bias, and radicalization before they manifest into violent extremism. Our work supports individuals and communities to reject propaganda and extremist content, as well as empower them to intervene and interrupt early radicalization.



If your work touches violence prevention, trust and safety, child protection, education, or countering extremism and you would like a closer look at the data, visit <https://nve.perilresearch.com/>.



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