

## Child pornography: Operation "Sleeping dogs"

Ten people arrested and computer evidence of child pornography exchanges. This is the final outcome of the "Sleeping dogs" operation carried out by the Postal Police following an international investigation coordinated by the Rome Public Prosecutor's Office in collaboration with the police of other countries.

Thanks to the work of undercover agents, the police could identify a number of people who were disseminating and producing child pornography.

The people put under arrest are all middle class males, aged between 24 and 63, unmarried for the most part, all coming from northern and north-central Italy. Only two of them have criminal records for the same type of crime.

From the analysis of computer files, videos and photographs the police could also identify children aged 3, 5, 8 and 10 who had been sexually abused.

The operation took its name from the favourite video game of the very first criminal engaged in a chat room: "The sleeping dogs". An undercover agent lured him by asking tips to advance through the game levels in order to gain his confidence and trust.

All the suspects used to surf the deep web, so they were confident to remain anonymous and invisible. But investigators were successful in locating both offenders and victims using special tools aimed at disabling anonymizing software.

Darknets are networks hidden in the deep web, also populated by criminals who cloak themselves in obscurity with specialized software that guarantees anonymity to carry out illicit activities, including illicit arms sales, trafficking in human beings, money laundering, or paedophile rings.

Investigations are still ongoing.

Italian

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