



## Assistant Regional Security Officer-Investigators

Assistant Regional Security Officer-Investigators (ARSO-Is) are global investigative resources for DSS domestic field offices and in turn, U.S. law enforcement partners.

**ARSO-Is** are special agents who support DSS operations at more than 100 locations around the globe.

They investigate passport and visa fraud, assist in investigating crimes against U.S. citizens, and train and collaborate with foreign nation law enforcement and immigration authorities.



### LIAISON WORK

In addition to cooperating with U.S. federal and local law enforcement authorities, ARSO-Is work with foreign law enforcement officials, prosecutors, immigration authorities, airline personnel, and tourism officials to combat transnational organized crime.

Human trafficking, terrorism, and human and weapons smuggling are some of the transnational crimes that often involve U.S. visa and passport fraud.

**20,000+** requests for assistance fulfilled

**200+** fugitive returns

**600+** arrests and assisted arrests

• 80+ document vendor arrests

• 30+ human trafficking arrests

• 100+ human smuggling arrests

• ~5 terrorism-related arrests



**250**

Approximately ~250 recommended passport and consular report of birth abroad denials

**9,800+**

9,800+ recommended visa revocations and refusals

### INVESTIGATIONS

Because of DSS' global reach, ARSO-Is can target document vendors, smugglers, and traffickers at the source of their illicit operations overseas, deterring fraudulent practices that disrupt criminals' and terrorists' mobility and protect the U.S. homeland.

### TRAINING

ARSO-Is provide training for DSS, U.S., and foreign partners on travel document security features, fraudulent document and imposter detection methods, and suspect traveler profiles.



As a result of ARSO-I program training and guidance, foreign officials have disrupted human smuggling rings, interdicted foreign terrorist fighters, and captured high-profile fugitives.

**26,000+** foreign partners trained

**8,000+** State Department partners trained



# Assistant Regional Security Officer-Investigators

## CASE EXAMPLES

### **ARSO-I Manila returns multiple fugitives to the U.S. to face justice.**

Despite COVID-19 restrictions and new protocols, in 2020, the ARSO-I team at the U.S. Embassy in Manila, The Philippines, located and returned 10 fugitives facing charges such as murder, felony possession of a firearm, and more. One of the fugitives has been charged with 22 counts related to child sexual assault. The ARSO-I team regularly coordinates with the Philippine National Police, Philippine Bureau of Immigration, and U.S law enforcement partners to return these individuals to the United States.

### **ARSO-I Brasilia supports counterterrorism initiatives in Brazil.**

In 2020, the ARSO-I team at the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia, Brazil, continued to support Brazil's efforts to counter terrorism and organized crime in the tri-border region. A key component is the anti-terrorism biometrics initiative, which will allow the United States and Brazil to better exchange and access information about known or suspected criminals and terrorists. Other DSS elements, including the Antiterrorism Assistance Program and the chief technology officer, along with the FBI, also support these efforts.

### **ARSO-I Bogota takes down multiple visa fixers and human smugglers in Colombia.**

In 2020, the ARSO-I team at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, Colombia, conducted multiple investigations and operations that led to the arrest and sentencing of numerous visa fixers, human smugglers, and other criminals in the country. For instance, in September, the ARSO-I's vetted unit worked with the Colombian National Police Special Operations Commandos to arrest a visa fixer associated with a DSS case out of New York. The individual arrested is believed to be tied to more than 3,000 fraudulent visa applications. In another case "Operation Ironman," DSS helped dismantle an international human smuggling scheme in which individuals obtained U.S. visas for applicants falsely claiming to be triathletes traveling to the U.S. for competitions.

### **ARSO-I Rome brokered historic training agreements with Italians.**

After two years of development, in January 2020, the ARSO-I at the U.S. Embassy in Rome, Italy, brokered a historic training agreement with all police agencies in Italy, which specifies that the ARSO-I team in Rome will deliver document fraud and imposter detection training to every new Italian police officer at Italian police training academies. This agreement forges a stronger relationship between DSS and law enforcement elements in Italy, which helps both countries better detect and deter transnational crime.

Contact the Office of Overseas Criminal Investigations:

**Email:** [DS\\_OCI\\_Admin@state.gov](mailto:DS_OCI_Admin@state.gov)