



P.O. Box. 57338, Salt Lake City, Utah 84157

August 14, 2023

Operation Underground Railroad (O.U.R.) objects to Charity Navigator’s decision to issue an alert toward O.U.R. as we believe that certain articles and media outlets have misled the public about O.U.R. and its simple mission: we exist to fight against human trafficking and sexual exploitation worldwide.¹ We provide resources – financial, operational, aftercare, and logistics, – to survivors, law enforcement, and other organizations both domestically and abroad, and have done so for almost ten years. Issuing an alert based upon *two* articles is fundamentally unfair not only to potential donors, but to O.U.R. and, notably, the survivors we support. O.U.R. is a leader in the care of survivors around the world.

O.U.R. contends that Vice has been relentless in their smear campaign toward O.U.R. for years, consistently providing misinformation in its articles. The July 6, 2023 article cited to support the issuance of the alert is no different. Vice again unfairly criticizes the organization while citing its own articles as support for the claims it makes. There are too many inaccuracies to address here, but we do note that the Vice article focuses primarily on Tim Ballard, O.U.R.’s Founder, who is no longer with O.U.R. after a mutually agreeable separation at the end of June 2023.² O.U.R. maintains no ongoing connections with Mr. Ballard, receives no funding from his new organization, and does not receive any direct proceeds³ from Mr. Ballard’s movie, “The Sound of Freedom.” While the movie tells the story of how O.U.R. was started, and brings awareness to the topic of human trafficking, it is not a documentary.⁴

The July 19th NPR article also focuses more on Tim Ballard and others, such as Jim Caviezel, a Hollywood actor, rather than O.U.R. The first time O.U.R. is even mentioned is in the ninth paragraph and it provides inaccurate information about Ballard’s role with O.U.R. The article continues with a discussion on Q’anon, which O.U.R. does not endorse or otherwise support. Most troubling, is NPR’s citation to Vice articles in support of its inaccurate assertions about O.U.R. It utterly fails to include articles that provide facts of what O.U.R.’s prior missions have accomplished around the world⁵ and here in the United States. Instead, NPR engages in “click bait”, raising sensational Q’anon conspiracies that have nothing to do with O.U.R. or its mission or work.⁶

In sum, O.U.R. is a charitable, nonpartisan leader in the prevention and care of survivors around the world. We provide invaluable resources to law enforcement worldwide to help combat human trafficking in their respective regions working in collaboration with each other. O.U.R. can only accomplish this mission with the generous support from donors. Should anyone have any questions or concerns about O.U.R., please reach out to us directly at info@ourrescue.org.

¹[End Child Trafficking | Operation Underground Railroad \(ourrescue.org\)](https://www.ourrescue.org/end-child-trafficking-operation-underground-railroad).

² [‘Sound of Freedom’ Inspiration Tim Ballard Leaves Anti-Trafficking Org – Rolling Stone.](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/feature/sound-of-freedom-2023-07-06/)

³ [Sound Of Freedom | Operation Underground Railroad \(ourrescue.org\)](https://www.ourrescue.org/sound-of-freedom-operation-underground-railroad)

⁴ [Sound of Freedom: Based on A True Story \(Except for the Parts That Aren't\) \(ourrescue.org\)](https://www.ourrescue.org/sound-of-freedom-based-on-a-true-story-except-for-the-parts-that-arent)

⁵ E.g. <https://www.minocp.gov.gr/2023/07/11/11-07-2023-anakoinosi-ypourgeiou-prostasias-tou-politi/>
<https://www.elcolombiano.com/medellin/capturaron-a-estadounidense-que-abusaria-y-haria-tatuara-a-sus-victimas-DM21781046>;
<https://www.khaosodenglish.com/news/2023/03/17/patong-sex-bar/>

⁶ [FAQ | Operation Underground Railroad \(ourrescue.org\)](https://www.ourrescue.org/faq)