



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Samar court sentences online sex trafficker to up to 42 years in prison

SAMAR, PHILIPPINES – A woman faces an imprisonment of up to 42 years for sexually abusing minors in exchange for money from online sex offenders.

On March 22, 2023, four days after her arrest, the trafficker (name withheld to protect her victims' identities) entered into a plea agreement, pleading guilty to three counts of possessing child sexual abuse and exploitation material at the Regional Trial Court Branch 30 in the municipality of Basey, Samar.

She was sentenced to serve a total of 36 to 42 years in prison and was ordered to pay a total fine of P900,000 for all three offenses.

“Every conviction means more children are safe from the horrific crime of online sexual exploitation. Perpetrators must be made aware that the online sexual exploitation of children is a severe crime that carries severe consequences. We will not rest until every child is protected from harm and every perpetrator is held accountable for their actions,” said Regional Prosecutor Irwin Maraya.

On March 18, 2023, members of the Philippine National Police’s Women and Children Protection Center - Visayas Field Unit (WCPC-VFU) arrested the trafficker for producing and distributing child sexual abuse and exploitation materials (CSAEM) of her own underaged daughters, who were rescued during the operation.

Prosecutor Julius Babalcon of DOJ-IACAT Task Force in Region 8 provided onsite legal support while IJM Cebu lawyers supported remotely. The trafficker's arrest stemmed from a tip from German authorities about a Filipino woman producing and distributing CSAEM.

“We commend our partners in the Philippine government for swiftly delivering justice in this case. This demonstrated that a strong investigation builds air-tight evidence that makes a compelling case for conviction,” said lawyer and IJM Cebu Director Lucille Dejito. “At IJM, we are dedicated to protecting children and holding accountable those who abuse and exploit them. We are committed to working hand in hand with the government and law enforcement to put an end to this heinous crime and keep Filipino children safe.”

Online sexual exploitation of children, including trafficking for the purpose of creating child sexual exploitation material, is a growing, borderless crime. In these crimes, sex offenders communicate online with traffickers (often family members or close relatives of victims), paying and directing them to livestream the sexual abuse and exploitation of children. In 2022, [88.3 million](#) images, videos, and other files related to child sexual exploitation were reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

To date, IJM has supported Philippine authorities in the conviction of 191 people for offenses related to the online sexual exploitation of children. IJM has also supported more than 334 operations, resulting in the rescue of 1,113 victims.

To report information about online child sexual exploitation, contact WCPC at 0966-725-5961 (Globe) and 0919-777-7377 (Smart). ###

Notes to Editors:

- Under Philippine laws, the name and personal circumstances of the trafficked person or any other information tending to establish the identity of the trafficked person and his or her family shall not be disclosed to the public.
- The Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, also known as the Luxembourg Guidelines, prescribes the use of the term “child sexual abuse material” or “child sexual exploitation material” instead of “child pornography”. Sexualized material that depicts or otherwise represents children is a representation, and a form, of child sexual abuse and should not be described as “pornography.”

For more inquiries, contact:

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IJM’s Program Against Online Sexual Exploitation of Children

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About IJM

International Justice Mission is a global organization that protects people in poverty from violence. IJM partners with local authorities in 28 program offices in 16 countries to combat slavery and violence against women and children. IJM works with local authorities and governments to rescue and restore survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and help strengthen public justice systems so they can better protect people from violence.

Our 21 years of work in the Philippines led to a dramatic decrease in the prevalence of sex trafficking of children in bars and brothels—reductions ranging from 72%-86% in the cities where we partnered with local authorities. In 2016, IJM fully transitioned our program in the Philippines to combat online sexual exploitation of children, in particular the trafficking of children to create new child sexual abuse materials, including via livestreaming.

Learn more: osec.IJM.org.