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Philippines Maintains Tier 1 Ranking in U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report

Manila, Philippines - International Justice Mission (IJM), a global organization dedicated to combating human trafficking and protecting vulnerable individuals, commends the Philippines on its remarkable achievement of maintaining its Tier 1 ranking in the U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report for the eighth consecutive year.

The recently released 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report ([TIP Report](#)) highlights the Philippines' exemplary efforts in the fight against all forms of human trafficking. The annual report ranks countries based on the strength and effectiveness of their anti-trafficking efforts.

"This outstanding accomplishment underscores the Philippines' position as a global leader in the fight to end trafficking in persons, including the online sexual exploitation of children. On behalf of IJM, I would like to express our deepest appreciation to the Philippine government for their exceptional leadership in creating a nation—and a world—free from exploitation," said Atty. Samson Inocencio Jr., National Director and Regional Vice President of the IJM's Program Against Online Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Notably, this latest recognition coincides with a recent rescue operation in Plaridel, Bulacan, led by the Philippine National Police - Women and Children Protection Center (PNP-WCPC). Two children were rescued from online sexual exploitation, and a suspected trafficker was arrested on June 16, 2023.

"We applaud the PNP for their swift response to international referrals and their determination to protect the most vulnerable members of society, particularly children who are victims of online sexual exploitation," Inocencio added.

The rescue operation in Plaridel, Bulacan, stemmed from a referral from Australian authorities following their [arrest](#) of Australian citizen Timothy John Lane at the Sydney International Airport, according to the PNP-WCPC. Lane's arrest followed the discovery of child abuse material on his mobile phone.

Further analysis of content on his phone revealed distressing conversations with female adults in the Philippines who are suspected to have received financial compensation from Lane for their involvement in producing child abuse materials.

The operation was led by PCOL Portia B. Manalad, the Acting Chief of WCPC, in collaboration with the Plaridel Municipal Police Station, and in coordination with the Plaridel Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office and IJM.

Trafficking for the purpose of creating child sexual exploitation material is a growing, borderless crime. Offenders use online platforms to communicate with traffickers, often relatives or close

acquaintances of the victims, directing them to livestream the sexual abuse and exploitation of children. Shockingly, in 2022, a staggering [88.3 million](#) images, videos, and other files related to child sexual exploitation were reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Despite the Philippines' consistent Tier 1 ranking in the global fight against human trafficking, there remains an urgent need for sustained efforts to address the significant scale of the problem.

“To maintain a Tier 1 ranking, governments need to demonstrate appreciable progress each year in combating trafficking. Tier 1 represents a responsibility rather than a reprieve,” states the TIP report.

The report emphasizes the need for additional investment in prevalence studies to uncover critical data and gain a more accurate understanding of the reality of trafficking. Coinciding with this recommendation, IJM is preparing to release a study called the Scale of Harm, which will provide valuable estimates on the prevalence of trafficking for the production of child sexual exploitation material in the Philippines.

This groundbreaking study aims to contribute to the development of data-driven strategies and policies, further fortifying the ongoing efforts to combat this exploitation and ensure the protection of vulnerable children.

To date, IJM has provided support to Philippine authorities in rescuing 1,120 victims and apprehending 349 suspected perpetrators, with at least 193 of them having been convicted.

To report information about online child sexual exploitation, contact the Philippine National Police – Women and Children Protection Center 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.”

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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 rescue and restore survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and help strengthen public justice systems so they can better protect people from violence.

Our 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: IJM.org.ph