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Taguig City Court Convicts Trafficker in Online Child Sexual Exploitation Case

TAGUIG CITY, PHILIPPINES – For engaging in the heinous act of sexually abusing children for profit online, a female trafficker has been sentenced to a maximum of 26 years of imprisonment. This sentencing comes after she pleaded guilty to attempted trafficking and child abuse.

On June 13, 2023, the Regional Trial Court Branch 15-FC in Taguig City delivered its verdict, sentencing the trafficker to 20 years of imprisonment for the offense of attempted trafficking. The court also handed down an additional four to six years of imprisonment for the offense of child abuse.

“This conviction marks another milestone in our relentless pursuit of justice for the victims of online sexual exploitation. This crime inflicts profound trauma upon innocent children and devastates families. Let this conviction serve as a warning to all criminals involved in online exploitation: Justice will prevail, and we will spare no effort to bring you to face the full force of the law,” said Prosecutor Princess Roxanne Sucor.

The case stemmed from a referral from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation to the Philippine National Police – Women and Children Protection Center, which resulted in the rescue of six minors on Oct. 19, 2016. Follow-up rescue operations in January 2017 brought three more minors to safety.

Alongside the prison terms, the trafficker was also ordered to pay the fine of P1 million for the offense of attempted trafficking, and an additional P10,000 in moral damages for the offense of child abuse.

“This conviction stands as a powerful testament to the unwavering dedication of the Philippine government in creating a safe nation for Filipino children. At IJM, we maintain a steadfast commitment to fighting the online sexual exploitation of children. We work hand in hand with the government, civil society partners, and the private sector in our collective pursuit of a society where the harrowing experiences of child exploitation and abuse no longer exist,” said IJM Manila Director Reynaldo Bicol.

Trafficking for the purpose of creating child sexual exploitation material is a growing and borderless crime. Offenders use online platforms to communicate with traffickers, who are often relatives or close acquaintances of the victims, directing them to livestream the sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

In 2022 alone, 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.

IJM is preparing to release a study called Scale of Harm, which seeks to provide a prevalence estimate of trafficking for the production of child sexual exploitation material in the Philippines.

Findings from the study will offer crucial insights for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and organizations engaged in combating this problem.

To date, IJM has provided support to Philippine authorities in rescuing 1,123 victims and apprehending 355 suspected perpetrators, with at least 195 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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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 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