



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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4 persons convicted in Pateros and Cavite for online sexual exploitation of children

LUZON, PHILIPPINES – In a landmark month for the fight against online sexual exploitation of children, four persons were convicted in January 2023, including two female traffickers who were sentenced to life imprisonment.

A court in Pateros, Manila, and another in Bacoor City, Cavite, handed down the verdicts in different cases, which stemmed from two separate operations, in 2019 and 2021.

On January 25, 2023, the Bacoor City Regional Trial Court Branch 111 found a mother and her adult daughter guilty of qualified trafficking and sentenced each of them to life imprisonment. The court also ordered each of them to pay P2 million in fines and P600 in damages to one complainant. Both traffickers were arrested in November 2019 in an operation against online sexual exploitation.

Both traffickers also received a sentence ranging from 20 years to 40 years for violating the Anti-Child Pornography Act. For this conviction, the court ordered each to pay P2 million in fines and P600,000 in damages to one complainant.

On January 23, 2023, the Pateros Regional Trial Court Branch 262, sentenced two persons to 15 years and six months in prison after they pleaded guilty to attempted trafficking in persons and attempt to cause a child physical harm. Each of them was ordered to pay a total fine of P600,000 and to undergo psychological counseling or psychiatric treatment, as required by the Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act.

“I am quite happy about the outcome of this case. I’m grateful that the perpetrators will be held accountable for their actions and that the children will no longer suffer from their abusers. They can now begin their journey towards healing and restoration knowing that justice has been served,” said IJM Prosecution Development Lead Lawyer Raena Marie P. Asistores.

She also noted that the mandatory psychological counseling or psychiatric treatment showed the progressive nature of the Philippine justice system in caring for the mental well-being of individuals who have been convicted of crimes under the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) Act.

She said: “We believe that the implementation of the judge of the requirement of psychological counseling or psychiatric treatment under the Anti-VAWC Act is another measure that would be very instrumental in the healing of all the parties. Through this, the perpetrators may truly understand the effects of their offense, and be rehabilitated and restored, and their risk of being repeat offenders may be lowered.”

Authorities arrested the two convicted perpetrators during an operation in Pateros on March 4, 2021, that also resulted in the rescue of two female minors who were the biological daughters of one of the suspects.

Lawyer Kathleen Joy Piccio, Head of IJM Manila Prosecution Development, said: “By entering into a plea agreement, the child victims are spared from further trauma. It is a testament to child friendly prosecution and swift justice for the children who were abused as they no longer have to relive their painful experiences in court, face their perpetrators, and endure the length of a full trial.”

To date, IJM has supported Philippine authorities in the conviction of more than 170 people for offenses related to the online sexual exploitation of children. IJM has also supported more than 300 operations, leading to the rescue of more than 1,000 victims.

Note 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 29 program offices in 17 countries to combat slavery, violence against women and children, and police abuse of power against people who are poor. 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.