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## **Philippine Government Launches New Tool for Data-Driven Fight against Human Trafficking**

The Philippine government, in partnership with International Justice Mission (IJM), has launched a powerful new tool to strengthen the country's fight against human trafficking and protect vulnerable communities.

Named the IACAT ProtectPortal, the data management system enhances government agencies' ability to consolidate and access trafficking-related data, leading to smarter decision and stronger protection efforts.

"This is the Philippine government's central gateway to protection and response," said Department of Justice (DOJ) Undersecretary Nicholas Felix Ty, Undersecretary-in-Charge of the DOJ Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking (IACAT).

"We have achieved incredible progress in our fight against trafficking in persons, which has been recognized globally. But we still have more work to do. This data management tool would help us accelerate our efforts to protect our communities, especially children, from exploitation," added Ty.

For nine straight years, the Philippines has earned Tier 1 status—the highest ranking—in the U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, recognizing the country's consistent compliance with international standards to combat human trafficking.

As mandated by the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, IACAT established ProtectPortal to consolidate TIP-related data across all phases of government response, from investigation to prosecution.

"We have always used data in crafting anti-trafficking programs and policies," said IJM Philippines Director Samson Inocencio Jr. "But with ProtectPortal, the government can do away with duplicative efforts in data collection and management, which will save the government precious time and resources."

ProtectPortal supplements IJM's efforts to develop and sustain evidence-based interventions against online sexual exploitation and abuse of children (OSAEC), one of the worst forms of human trafficking.

IJM has led studies to understand the nature and scale of OSAEC, particularly the trafficking of children to produce child sexual exploitation material (CSEM). In 2023,

IJM released the *Scale of Harm* study, which estimated that nearly 500,000 Filipino children were trafficked to produce CSEM in 2022.

Another IJM-led 2020 study underscored the disturbing nature of this type of child exploitation. The median age of victims was only 11 years, and biological parents, trusted relatives and neighbors constitute most traffickers who facilitate the abuse.

“As we work to strengthen community response for this devastating yet underreported crime, we urge local government leaders to pay attention to data and make use of it to design measures to protect children from exploitation,” Inocencio added.

The Philippine Survivor Network (PSN) welcomed the government’s adoption of ProtectPortal and lauded efforts to ensure evidence-based and data-driven interventions.

“Today, I stand here not as a number—but as a person,” said survivor leader Patricia Montano. “And this ProtectPortal, this platform, is a powerful symbol that our government is listening. It tells us that we are no longer just reacting to trafficking after it happens—we are now working to prevent it. We are gathering data, analyzing patterns, and building systems that protect the vulnerable people before they are harmed.”

Aside from reducing duplicative data management efforts among agencies, ProtectPortal is also envisioned to eliminate data inconsistencies and enable faster, more coordinated investigations and prosecutions.

IACAT has begun engaging with key partner agencies to establish seamless collaboration for data migration and data contribution to ProtectPortal.

The system was officially launched on September 25, 2025, during a ceremony at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel, led by IACAT and attended by representatives from IJM and multiple government agencies.

“This is just the beginning,” said Usec. Ty. “The ProtectPortal sets the stage for a more informed, united, and impactful fight against trafficking in persons. Data alone doesn’t end trafficking—but when it’s accurate, timely, and well-analyzed, it becomes a powerful tool for change.” ###

For inquiries, contact:

**Evelyn Pingul**

*Director, Community Engagement*

IJM's Program Against Online Sexual Exploitation of Children

[epingul@ijm.org](mailto:epingul@ijm.org)

## **About IJM**

International Justice Mission is a global organization that protects people in poverty from violence. IJM partners with local authorities in 33 communities in 18 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: <https://www.ijm.org.ph>