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March 7, 2024

Supreme Court Affirms Woman's Conviction in OSAEC case

MANILA, PHILIPPINES – A woman who livestreamed the sexual abuse of her six-year-old niece will spend up to 40 years of her life in prison after the Supreme Court upheld the decision of a lower court that found her guilty.

In 2020, the Regional Trial Court of Angeles City sentenced the culprit (name withheld to protect her victim's identity) to suffer *reclusion perpetua* (from 20 years and one day to 40 years in prison) and ordered her to pay a fine of P2 million and civil damages amounting to P300,000.

Before elevating her appeal to the Supreme Court, the culprit unsuccessfully sought a reversal of the decision at the Court of Appeals.

“Serious legal consequences await anyone who sexually abuses and exploits children online. May this conviction, and the many others achieved in the past, remind would-be perpetrators that the Philippine criminal justice system does not take lightly this grave offense against our precious children,” said Assistant City Prosecutor Anthony Aloysius Manalang of Angeles City.

The trafficking of children to produce child sexual exploitation materials, including livestreamed abuse, is widespread in the Philippines. International Justice Mission's [Scale of Harm](#) prevalence study estimates that nearly half a million Filipino children were victims of this crime in 2022 alone, with nearly a quarter of a million adult Filipinos perpetrating it during the same period.

In the recent conviction, the culprit was found guilty of violating provisions under R.A. 9775 or the Anti-Child Pornography Act, a law repealed by the enactment of R.A. 11930 or the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) in 2022.

The Supreme Court, in a [press release](#) about the case last Feb. 26, 2024, noted that pending cases filed under the old law are not affected when the repealing law punishes the same act. It stated: “Under such absolute repeal, the offense no longer exists as if the person who committed it never did so. An exception to this rule is where the repealing law reenacts the former statute and punishes the act previously penalized under the old law.”

Operatives from the Philippine National Police (PNP) Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division arrested the culprit in 2016, following an investigation that stemmed from a tip from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

They rescued her six-year-old niece, who disclosed her abuse and was seen in child sexual abuse and exploitation materials retrieved from the perpetrator's residence. Authorities also brought to safety the child's younger brother and the culprit's own daughter who were considered at-risk minors.

IJM supported the Office of the City Prosecutor of Angeles City to bring the perpetrator to justice. “During one of our briefings at a shelter, [the six-year-old victim] shared that she allowed her aunt to abuse and exploit her because the former threatened to hurt and sexually abuse her brother as well if she didn't comply. This is a hidden face of modern-day slavery. A child already knew that she was being preyed on by a family member and she detested it. She was forced to obey and continued working against her will in order to save and protect her younger brother from meeting the same fate, until the day arrived when they were finally rescued,” said Atty. Kathleen Joy Piccio-Labay, IJM Manila’s Head of Prosecution Development.

IJM Manila Director Reynaldo Bicol added: “Holding offenders to account for their crimes is key to protecting children from online sexual abuse and exploitation. More perpetrators may still be out there doing this crime, and I cannot overemphasize the vital role of community members in ensuring that offenders are restrained. I urge anyone with knowledge of this crime happening in their neighborhoods to immediately report it to authorities.”

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).

To date, IJM has supported Philippine authorities in bringing more than 1,200 victims and children-at-risk to safety and in apprehending 386 suspected perpetrators, at least 223 of whom have been convicted. ###

Notes to Editors:

- 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 31 communities 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