



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Trafficker Gets Four Life Sentences in Davao City**

DAVAO CITY, PHILIPPINES – Arrested after offering to sexually abuse her 6-year-old son and a one-year-old girl for profit, a 32-year-old trafficker in Davao City has been sentenced to four life terms, marking one of the strongest penalties ever imposed in a case of online child sexual exploitation.

The Davao City Regional Trial Court Branch 8 found the female trafficker guilty of qualified trafficking, child abuse, and offering child sexual abuse material through the use of a computer system. Aside from multiple life terms, Presiding Judge Glenn De Castro Aquino sentenced her to an additional 14 years in prison and ordered her to pay a total of P6 million in fines and P1.5 million in moral, civil and exemplary damages.

“This conviction is another testament to the government’s relentless effort in combatting and ending trafficking in persons, especially the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children,” Regional Prosecutor Janet Grace Dalisay-Fabrero said of the court decision dated Oct. 16, 2023.

The trafficking of children to produce child sexual exploitation materials, including livestreamed abuse, is widespread in the Philippines. IJM’s [Scale of Harm](#) 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 this form of exploitation during the same period.

The Davao City conviction stemmed from a law enforcement operation on June 13, 2018. Before this, the Nordic Police Liaison in Manila had passed on information to the Philippine National Police - Women and Children Protection Center (PNP-WCPC) following the arrest of a Swedish national involved in procuring child sexual exploitation material from the Philippines.

Members of the WCPC-Mindanao Field Unit, in collaboration with the Davao City Police Office and the Talomo Police Office, arrested the trafficker in an entrapment operation and rescued her young son and the female toddler who was under her care. Her arrest came after she offered to sexually abuse the two children in exchange for money online.

Social workers from the Department of Social Welfare and Development Region 11 and the Davao City Social Welfare Service were present during the operation.

“The Department of Justice will always be at the forefront of protecting our children from this modern-day menace. I commend the handling prosecutors for delivering justice to the victim. May this serve as a warning to traffickers that we will not stop until we have put them all behind bars,” Regional Prosecutor Dalisay-Fabrero added.

Deputy Regional Prosecutor Barbara Mae Flores prosecuted the case, together with Senior Assistant Regional Prosecutor Robert Michael Razon and Assistant City Prosecutor Peter Paul Tombo.

IJM provided technical and legal support during the investigation and was consulted by government prosecutors during the early stages of the trial. “This stands out as one of the most robust sentences we, at IJM, have witnessed in a conviction for a case of online sexual exploitation of children. Convictions like this help to intensify deterrence for this crime. Another powerful form of deterrence is when the people in the community are vigilant and active in reporting cases of online sexual exploitation to authorities. IJM is prepared to assist our government partners in bringing victims to safety and holding perpetrators accountable,” said lawyer and IJM Cebu Director Lucille Dejito.

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 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](http://IJM.org.ph)