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International Anti-Trafficking Organization Lauds Bacolod LGU Initiatives vs. Online Child Sexual Exploitation

BACOLOD CITY — An international anti-trafficking organization has commended the Bacolod City Government for its strong and proactive measures against the Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC)—a grave cybercrime where traffickers livestream the sexual abuse of minors for profit.

More than 50 frontliners—including law enforcers, social workers, prosecutors, educators, health officers, information officers, and child protection advocates—will now form part of a multi-disciplinary team dedicated to combating OSAEC in the city.

Mayor Greg Gasataya expressed optimism that this initiative, undertaken in partnership with the International Justice Mission (IJM), will strengthen the city's fight against online child abuse.

“We will never tolerate online sexual abuse and exploitation of children in our city,” said Mayor Gasataya. “Our frontliners are fully prepared to hold traffickers accountable, rescue and rehabilitate victims, and send a powerful message of justice to both active and potential perpetrators. I urge everyone to remain vigilant, as this crime is often committed within homes. Report it immediately to ensure the timely rescue of victims.”

The IJM recently spearheaded the Multi-Disciplinary Team – Basic Internet Crimes Against Children (MDT–BICAC) training, providing participants with foundational knowledge on Internet-based crimes targeting minors, with a particular focus on OSAEC.

OSAEC involves the trafficking of children to produce sexual exploitation materials, including livestreamed abuse, for financial gain. In many cases, the crime is perpetrated by family members or trusted individuals who connect with offenders abroad.

Unlike other forms of trafficking, OSAEC often occurs inside the victim's home, making detection more difficult and demanding proactive law enforcement and community vigilance. In some localities, these crimes are deceptively referred to as “show” or “show me.”

Attorney Lovelie Faith Entoma-Forcadilla, IJM's Head of Collaborative Casework, lauded Mayor Gasataya's commitment to child protection, citing the creation of the Bacolod SAFE Hotline (Support and Action for Families in Emergency) through an executive order.

The SAFE Hotline aims to streamline reporting and response mechanisms for cases involving gender-based violence, children in need of special protection, and other social welfare concerns.

“The Bacolod LGU has been very supportive in the fight against OSAEC. They have successfully passed an anti-OSAEC ordinance and recently established the SAFE Hotline to provide a local reporting mechanism for these cases,” Forcadilla said.

According to a 2022 prevalence study by IJM and the University of Nottingham Rights Lab, nearly **half a million Filipino children—about 1 in every 100—**¹ have been trafficked to produce sexual exploitation materials for profit.

IJM Philippines' Community Engagement Director, Evelyn G. Pingul, commended Bacolod's proactive efforts:

"Local government units are the first line of defense against online sexual exploitation of children. Bacolod City's commitment and initiatives are truly commendable and set a strong example for other LGUs," Pingul said. "The Philippines' Tier 1 ranking in the 2025 US Trafficking in Persons Report reflects our national dedication to combating human trafficking. Bacolod's leadership demonstrates how local governments can translate that commitment into real protection for children."

Since 2011, IJM has worked closely with Philippine law enforcement, prosecution, and social services to rescue OSAEC victims and prosecute offenders. However, many first responders still face operational challenges at the local level.

The IJM Scale of Harm (2023) study highlighted the need to strengthen community-based vigilance and capacity-building among local law enforcement and barangay officials to reduce child trafficking for exploitation materials.

> "The vigilance of the community will go a long way," Forcadilla added. "With the SAFE Hotline now in place, Bacolod can provide a secure channel for citizens to report OSAEC cases and actively participate in protecting children."

To report OSAEC incidents, contact the Bacolod City SAFE Hotline or the PNP–Women and Children Protection Center at:

 0966-725-5961 (Globe) | 0919-777-7377 (Smart)

***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 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>