Manila, Philippines

The Problem: Cybersex Trafficking

Manila is the capital city, a major global port and the hub of the country’s government, business and cultural institutions. But beyond the towering skyscrapers a devastating form of slavery called cybersex trafficking. Pedophiles and predators send online payments to Filipino adults, in exchange for streaming live sexual abuse of young boys and girls. IJM has worked alongside Philippine authorities to combat slavery and sexual violence since 2000. Officials are ready to act but need specialized training to restrain criminals and stop cybersex trafficking from spreading.

IJM Manila Progress

650+ survivors rescued from sex trafficking and child sexual abuse (2006-2016)
190+ criminals convicted for trafficking and sexual assault (since 2006)
160+ survivors rescued from cybersex trafficking (since 2016)

The Facts

There are an estimated 750,000 predators online at any given moment.¹

Human trafficking is a massive global enterprise, generating about $150 billion a year—two-thirds from commercial sexual exploitation.²

Worldwide, about 70% of human trafficking victims are women and girls, and up to 50% are minors.³

¹UN, ²Ibid., ³Walk Free, ILO, and IOM
We rescue victims by helping Filipino authorities and international law enforcement agencies to identify and remove children from cybersex trafficking. Pedophiles anywhere in the world can pay to purchase child pornography or direct live sexual abuse.

We bring criminals to justice. We help police investigate and gather evidence so that traffickers and criminals facilitating online sexual exploitation are restrained. We help prosecutors press charges and build strong cases using all available evidence.

We restore survivors by creating individualized care plans for IJM clients. Cybersex trafficking victims can be under 2 years old, and there are more boys than in bar- or street-based trafficking. IJM social workers help place survivors in aftercare homes where they can return to school, take vocational classes, and receive ongoing therapy. In addition to providing direct client care, we are developing best practices and pioneering new tools for shelters handling cybersex trafficking cases.

We strengthen justice systems by providing hands-on mentoring for law enforcement, judges, and partner organizations that provide aftercare for sex trafficking survivors. The Philippines has strong anti-trafficking laws, and we are helping to train authorities on how to implement them against this new crime type.

How IJM Manila Combats Cybersex Trafficking

“We have waited a long time for this to happen... The experiences that I went through have taught me to stand up and to dream again”

-Cassie,* a survivor of cybersex trafficking reacts to the news that the man who exploited her was convicted.

IJM MANILA MILESTONES

2000
IJM MANILA OPENS

2005
IJM’S FIRST CONVICTION
A man is sentenced to prison for raping a 13-year-old girl.

2012
IJM’S 100TH CONVICTION IN THE PHILIPPINES

2016
75% FEWER MINORS SOLD FOR SEX
In a 7-year period, the number of minors available for commercial sex trafficking in Metro Manila plummeted by 75%.

2017
FIRST CYBERSEX TRAFFICKING CONVICTION
In IJM’s first case of cybersex trafficking, a Filipino man is convicted for exploiting minors.

FIELD OFFICE DIRECTOR
REY BICOL

Rey joined IJM Manila in 2004 as a lawyer. He led IJM to prosecute more than 100 cases of sex trafficking and abuse. When the government invited IJM to open an office in Pampanga to combat commercial sex trafficking of minors, Rey joined as one of the key leaders. In just four years, the number of children being sold plummeted by 86%. He has returned to Manila and leads IJM’s office to rescue children and restrain traffickers.

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