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Center to End Online Sexual  
Exploitation of Children

# Shining a light on the hidden crime of livestreamed child sexual exploitation

**O**n March 2, *The Guardian* published an article that sheds light on the online sexual exploitation of children. Written by Harriet Grant, the article, *'It's an arms race': the tech teams trying to outpace paedophiles online*, underscores the need for technology that prevents and detects newly produced child sexual exploitation materials (CSEM), especially with major tech platforms adopting end-to-end encryption for their text and video chat services.

## **IJM believes that ending livestreamed child sexual abuse and the trafficking of children to create CSEM requires ending impunity for those who commit these violent crimes.**

As Grant highlights, the proliferation of child sexual abuse and exploitation online reveals a pandemic that must be urgently addressed to protect children from being further abused. As a victim-centered organization that partners with governments and other stakeholders to protect children from violence, IJM urges governments and all members of the tech and financial sector to protect the privacy interests of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and exploitation online. Doing so will significantly improve decisions to deploy technology and processes needed to detect these crimes in a timely manner and facilitate child protection efforts through robust reports.

Prioritizing protection of children and their privacy in legislative or regulatory reforms can help facilitate widespread industry use of tech innovations, automated detection of child exploitation, and cross-industry collaboration, among other things.

## **Improved tech and financial sector detection and reporting will support global efforts to protect children who need it now.**

Timely law enforcement intervention, as identified by the [IJM-led OSEC Study](#), would be aided by improved detection and reporting of newly produced CSEM and livestreamed child sexual abuse. In fact, early detection, coupled with robust reporting, will help law enforcement identify and rescue thousands of children in urgent need of protection before they suffer years of abuse.

Yet today, livestreamed child sexual abuse is largely undetected, which makes the crime grossly underreported. This detection gap results in a scarcity of global or country level data on the prevalence of newly produced CSEM or livestreamed abuse. Identification of newly produced CSEM and livestreamed abuse should become a corporate priority and essential business function because of the gravity of harm that ongoing sexual exploitation causes victims.

Based on our extensive experience addressing these crimes in the Philippines, IJM has developed a set of indicators to support industry detection. IJM's white paper, "Tech and Financial Sector Indicators of Livestreaming Online Sexual Exploitation of Children" is a free resource available to tech and financial sector representatives upon request to [endosec@ijm.org](mailto:endosec@ijm.org).

## **We are all collectively responsible to make criminal conduct harder to commit and easier to detect.**

As the *Guardian* article revealed, online sexual exploitation of children is a crime that flourishes for years in the shadows, hidden in private chats, video calls and livestreams. To protect children around the world who are exploited online right now, everyone must do the hard work that brings these crimes into the light. ■