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## Press Release

18 June 2020

### **53 Online Child Predator Cases Arrested Nationwide**

Bangkok, Thailand. Undeterred by a global pandemic, the Thailand Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce (TICAC) launched a nationwide cyber sting operation targeting online child predators in collaboration with local and international law enforcement agencies and NGOs.

The COVID-19 situation has placed children in Thailand at a higher risk of online exploitation. This was due to the increase in time spent online during school closures. In the first half of 2020, TICAC received 84,370 tips of online child exploitation from the U.S. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), compared to 117,232 tips for the entire year in 2019. In addition, TICAC has received 254 tips and complaints through its social media channel.

In response, Pol.Lt.Gen. Jaruvat Vaisaya, Assistant Police Commissioner General and TICAC Leader, under the direct command from General Chakthip Chaijinda, Royal Thai Police Commissioner General, has instructed TICAC and concerned police units to redouble the efforts in cracking down on online child predators and human trafficking rings engaged in child exploitation. “We will not allow a pandemic to stop us from protecting children,” emphasized the TICAC Leader.

The nationwide cyber sting operation took place during April 15-June 9, 2020. In just 56 days, TICAC was able to initiate 53 cases, leading to 44 arrests and 9 search operations in 24 provinces, and the uncover of over 150,000 files of child sexual abuse material that involved at least 100 children. Of the 47 arrested perpetrators, 45 persons were Thais and two were foreign nationals [one American and one Australian]. Many of these perpetrators were “contact offenders” and some have abused more than one victim. Nine cases have been charged under Thailand’s Anti Human Trafficking Act, B.E. 2551 (2008).

Since then, 40 child victims have been identified and their cases are being processed by the authorities. TICAC in collaboration with Thailand’s Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and NGOs will





continue to ensure that all the victims are accorded protection and have access to essential services in line with the victim-centered and trauma-informed care approach.

“The high number of arrests is not an indicator of success, nor is it something that makes our team satisfied. Each arrest tells us that a child is being abused and being traumatized severely,” explained a TICAC investigator. “Our team wants to see everyone work together to stop these crimes from happening in the first place. Prevention is the key.”

The Thailand Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce was established on January 8, 2016 following the amendment of the Thai Penal Code that defines possession of child sexual abuse material a punishable offense. To tackle this problem, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has instructed the Royal Thai Police to set up TICAC. The Taskforce currently has 180 officers and works closely with local as well as international partners, including collaboration with NGOs at 7 Child Advocacy Centres nationwide and law enforcement cooperation with NCMEC, U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Australian Federal Police. In 2019, TICAC’s operations led to 72 arrests of online child exploitation cases and the rescue of 46 child victims.

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### Operation Summary

- Date: April 15 - June 9, 2020 (56 days)
- Number of cases initiated: 53 cases in 24 provinces across Thailand resulting in 44 arrests and 9 search operations pending forensic examination result.
- Number of arrested offenders: 47 comprising 45 Thais and 2 foreign nationals.
- Number of exploited children: at least 100 children (89 boys and 11 girls) were recovered in over 150,000 files of child sexual abuse material, 40 of whom (31 boys and 9 girls) have been identified by the authorities.
- Law enforcement status: All of the 44 arrested cases have been charged, including 9 charges for human trafficking, 13 charges for child sexual exploitation, 30 charges for possession of child pornographic materials, and 4 charges for other criminal offense, such as possession of illegal drugs.

