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Outrage at child predator

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Light sentence for abuser

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A global organisation that combats sexual violence and trafficking has slammed the five-year prison sentence handed to a Tasmanian man whose online purchase of child exploitation material sparked the rescue of six minors in the Philippines last December.

Alan Raynor Gray, 41, of Launceston, was recently jailed by the Supreme Court of Tasmania after pleading guilty to eight Commonwealth offences, including ordering and receiving a video of a Filipino child recorded by a member of the child's family.

After Gray's Kings Meadows home was raided by the Tasmanian Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team last March, Australian and Philippine authorities collaborated with IJM on an investigation which resulted in the successful rescue operation.

IJM Director Philippines, Lucille Dejito, told the Mercury that while online sexual exploitation was perpetrated remotely, it had devastatingly real impacts on children.

Ms Dejito said tougher sentences in offenders' home countries were required to adequately deter others from committing similar offences.

"International Justice Mission commends the outstanding international collaboration between Australian and Philippine law enforcement, which not only led to the rescue of young victims in the Philippines but also ensured that perpetrators were held accountable in Australia," Ms Dejito said. "This collaboration exemplifies how we can effectively combat impunity when governments from both demand and supply countries unite. IJM recognises the profound seriousness and gravity of this crime.

"A mere five-year sentence

does not reflect the severity of the harm inflicted on these innocent lives.

"IJM firmly believes that the law must be enforced rigorously against such criminals to serve as a powerful deterrent.

"Strong sentences signify strong accountability, and

strong accountability is crucial for effective deterrence."

Describing the seriousness of Gray's conduct as "extremely high" Justice Michael Brett sentenced him to serve at least three years in jail before being eligible for parole, and ordered that his name be added to Tasmania's sex offenders register for the maximum 15 years allowed under law.

Ms Dejito highlighted a speech given to the Australian federal parliamentarians last November by a rescued Philippine survivor of online sexual abuse, who, using the pseudonym Briella, urged leaders to force technology companies to detect and prevent live-streamed abuse on their platforms and apps.

"When I was 14 years old, my sisters, cousins and I were victimised by someone we trusted, which was our aunt. It was a betrayal that changed the course of our lives," Briella said.

"The trauma I carried was heavy but, with the support of organisations like IJM and the Department of Social Welfare and Development, I was able to

transition back into the community. The painful reality is that this crime knows no borders – it is a global crisis.

"According to IJM's Scale of Harm study, half a million children in the Philippines were trafficked in 2022 to produce new and live-streamed child sexual abuse materials for paying offenders in western countries, including Australia.

"Tech companies must protect children on their platforms from online sexual exploitation on Australian screens."