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IMPORTANT EFFORT TO END TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS NEEDS FOCUSED ATTENTION AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

International Justice Mission, an organization that rescues victims from brothels, calls for monitoring of corruption and police complicity

ARLINGTON, VA June 3, 2005 - Today provides an opportunity for leaders in the human rights, NGO and governmental communities to focus on solutions to end modern-day slavery perpetuated by trafficking in persons. Today the State Department released its annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report highlighting and evaluating continued efforts around the world to combat human trafficking.

“At this critical time in the fight against human trafficking we commend the State Department for its increased emphasis in the 2005 TIP Report on police complicity and documenting disciplinary action against the police,” said Sharon Cohn, vice president of Interventions for International Justice Mission. International Justice Mission investigators have spent thousands of hours infiltrating brothels, gathering evidence to lead to the rescue of victims of sex trafficking and the conviction of traffickers, brothel keepers and others whose business is what Cohn calls “rape for profit.”

“Trafficking is a massive global problem,” said Cohn, “one that will require relentless and leveraged pressure against the people who trade in humans.” Cohn has worked on the front lines of IJM’s fight against trafficking and has spent many hours interviewing victims of sex trafficking, including very young children. “It’s deplorable to think slavery continues even today. It is time for people around the world to become more determined and better organized than people committing these crimes,” commented Cohn.

IJM has recently worked with the Philippine National Police-Crime Investigation and Detection Group (PNP-CIDG) Women and Children Complaint Division (WCCD) headed by Major Sotera Macatangay to raid a bar owned by a police officer where minors were held as sex slaves. The Philippine officials arrested this officer and rescued the victims. It is important for other countries to follow suit, according to Cohn. “We continue to see a hindrance to trafficking when low level law enforcement who participate and profit from trafficking go unpunished.” Cohn added, “Corruption must be rooted out at every level.”

In the past two weeks, IJM has worked on cases of trafficking and sexual exploitation that resulted in:

- Three 15 year sentences in the Dominican Republic – these were the first known ever trafficking convictions in the Dominican Republic.

- The guilty plea and 10 year sentencing of a Canadian sex tourist who abused children in Cambodia, some of whom were later rescued by IJM in an operation in Svay Pak, Cambodia.
- The arrest and conviction of two traffickers in Cambodia who were involved in an earlier case investigated by IJM that resulted in the rescue of 37 children, the youngest of whom was five years of age.

About International Justice Mission

International Justice Mission is a human rights organization that rescues victims of violence, sexual exploitation, slavery and oppression. A multi-national team of law enforcement professionals and a highly qualified legal staff conduct criminal investigations and collect evidence to rescue victims and bring perpetrators to justice. The work of IJM has been featured on Dateline NBC, FOX News, CNN, MSNBC, in Forbes Magazine, the New York Times Magazine, Wall Street Journal and other media outlets. IJM was founded by Gary Haugen who was the Officer in Charge of the U.N. investigation into the Rwandan genocide. **Haugen has just released the book “Terrify No More” which chronicles IJM’s efforts to rescue 37 young girls from a brothel in Cambodia.**

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