



INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION®

CAPTURE OF AMERICAN WOMAN CHARGED WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT REPRESENTS AGGRESSIVE EFFORTS TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN KENYA

International Justice Mission and local Kenyan authorities leverage unique partnership to deliver relief for local children

Washington, DC – Sherry Hsiao Hwa Chou, an American woman working with street children in Kenya, appeared in court on Tuesday, accused of sexually abusing four boys who were under her care over the past two years. Chou was arrested by local authorities on Sunday, with support from the human rights organization International Justice Mission (IJM). Chou, who was found at the time of her arrest with a minor in her home, pled not guilty to the charges.

Kenya's Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of the Children's Desk, Mrs. Christine Mutua, said earlier today that she is "grateful to International Justice Mission for its role in this case. The police will continue to work with like-minded entities to ensure that Kenya is safe for children."

Sexual violence affects millions of women and children in sub-Saharan Africa and is one of the driving forces behind the HIV/AIDS pandemic. International Justice Mission has collaborated with Kenyan authorities over the past five years to protect children from such abuse by investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of sexual assault. The arrests and convictions facilitated by IJM's intervention and collaboration with local authorities serve to deter current and aspiring perpetrators, who might otherwise operate with impunity, and bring rescue to victims of abuse.

Commenting on the charges against Sherry Chou, International Justice Mission's Director of Operations for Africa Reagan Demas said, "Crimes against children are particularly heinous when committed by a person in a position of trust and authority. The Kenyan police acted swiftly to ensure that child sexual abuse protection laws carry true meaning in the lives of these children." He added, "International Justice Mission will continue to work in collaboration with the government of Kenya, and responsible authorities around the world, to bring relief and rescue to people who are oppressed."

The director of IJM in Kenya, Joseph Kibugu, added, "We hope that international attention to this case may act to deter future abusers from coming to Kenya with the intention of abusing children without consequence."

IJM's work in Kenya focuses primarily on protection of women and children from abuse. IJM regularly works with Kenyan authorities to provide justice in cases of such abuse, including the case of Martha. Four-year-old Martha was raped and her assailant threatened to kill her and her family if she ever told anyone. IJM took Martha's case and secured justice for her and protection for her family by seeing the rapist put behind bars.

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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. IJM was founded by Gary Haugen who was the Officer in Charge of the U.N. investigation into the Rwandan genocide.

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