



IJM



University of  
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Rights Lab

# Prevalence Estimation

## Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

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# Introduction

In 2025, the world will mark 25 years since the adoption of the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children. This protocol, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol), and complements the 2000 United States Trafficking Victims Protection Act, reflects a global commitment to combating human trafficking. These legal instruments recognize the ongoing challenge of trafficking, define its many forms, and establish provisions for protection, prevention, and prosecution. Governments, intergovernmental bodies, and non-governmental organizations continue to work together to implement these measures worldwide.

One key focus of these national and international efforts is to better understand the nature and extent of human trafficking around the world. This understanding helps identify its main drivers and informs concrete actions and programming to reduce or eliminate human trafficking.

Prevalence estimation in modern slavery and human trafficking seeks to answer a fundamental question: How many people are enslaved, and where? Ongoing prevalence projects address this by typically focusing on different types of modern slavery and human trafficking within specific national and subnational geographies.

Prevalence estimation uses scientifically and statistically rigorous methods to measure the number, proportion, and ratio of individuals in modern slavery and human trafficking within a given study population. The goal is to minimize bias and uncertainty while ensuring the data can be replicated over time.

There is strong demand for prevalence estimations from governments, NGOs, and intergovernmental organizations. Prevalence estimation provides the basis for building explanatory models that explain root causes, dimensions, and geospatial patterns of modern slavery and human trafficking. They also establish baseline and endline data for monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning (MERL) in anti-slavery and anti-human trafficking efforts.

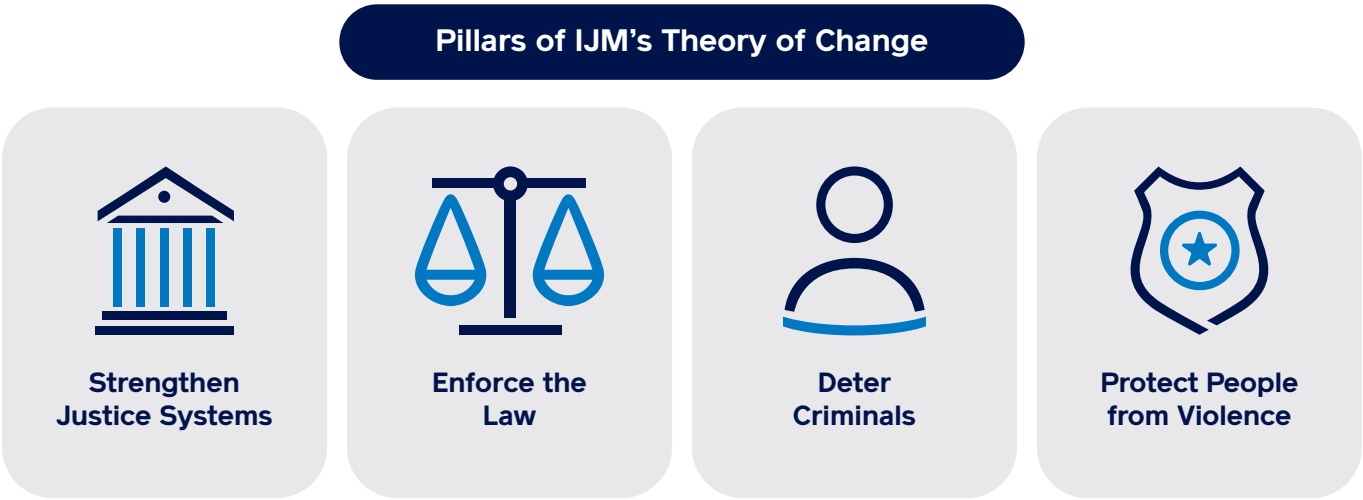
These efforts draw on precedents from related fields, such as studies on transatlantic slavery, conflict analysis, truth commissions, health and human rights, HIV/AIDs research, and studies on state and non-state violence. Today, there is a rich set of methodologies and research strategies available to conduct this work with increasing scientific rigor.

# International Justice Mission

International Justice Mission (IJM) is an integral part of the anti-trafficking eco-system. IJM has developed a theory of change grounded in poverty and violence, alongside a protection measurement framework that includes prevalence estimation.

IJM is a nonprofit organization that partners with governments and other organizations to protect people living in poverty from violence. Its theory of change (Figure 1) focuses on justice systems that enforce laws, which in turn deter criminals and, ultimately, provide protection from targeted forms of violence.

Figure 1: IJM’s Theory of Change

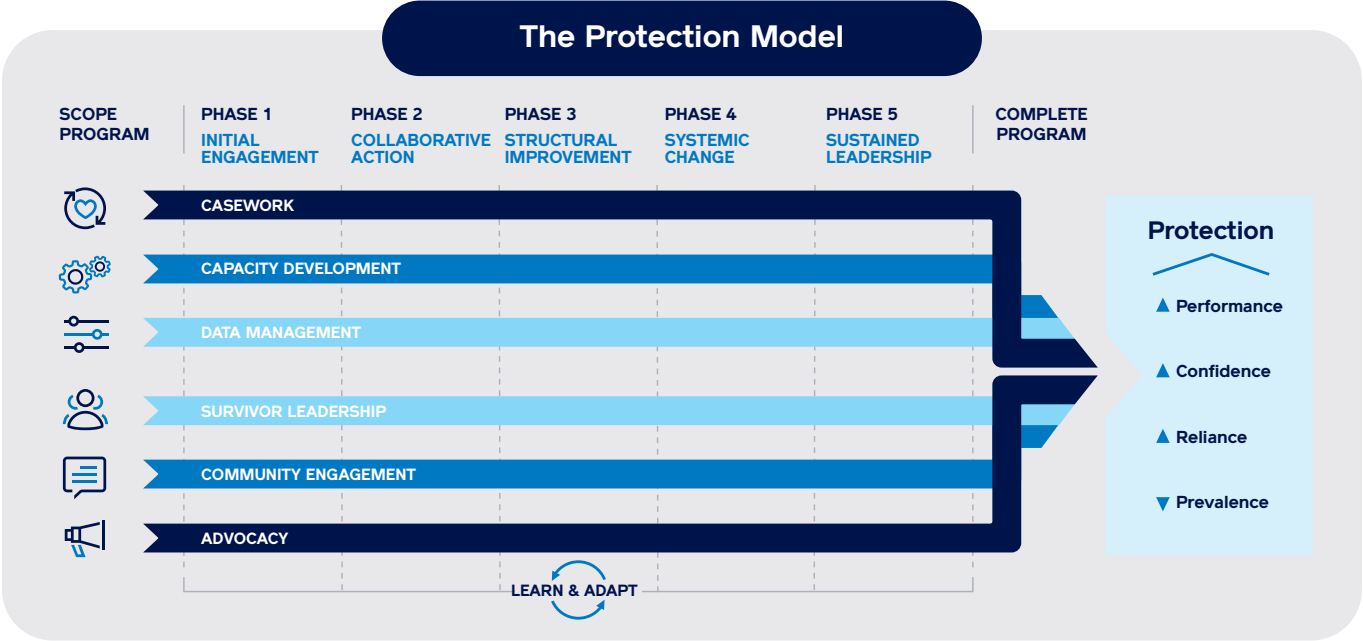


IJM defines ‘protection’ as the benefits people living in poverty receive through a strengthened justice system. These benefits include more effective case management, trauma-informed care for survivors, better coordination between police, prosecutors, and social services, increased reliance on the justice system for protection, and greater political commitment to the rule of law.

IJM operationalizes its theory of change through its Protection Model (Figure 2), shaped by its experience, evaluations of successful projects, and extensive human-centered design engagement with staff, governments, local partners, and survivors. The Protection Model outlines six key areas (or ‘dimensions’) where IJM and its partners will work, five phases of progress that governments can achieve, and four domains where change will occur. IJM teams adapt this model to each context, working closely with government, survivors, and other partners.



Figure 2: IJM’s Protection Model

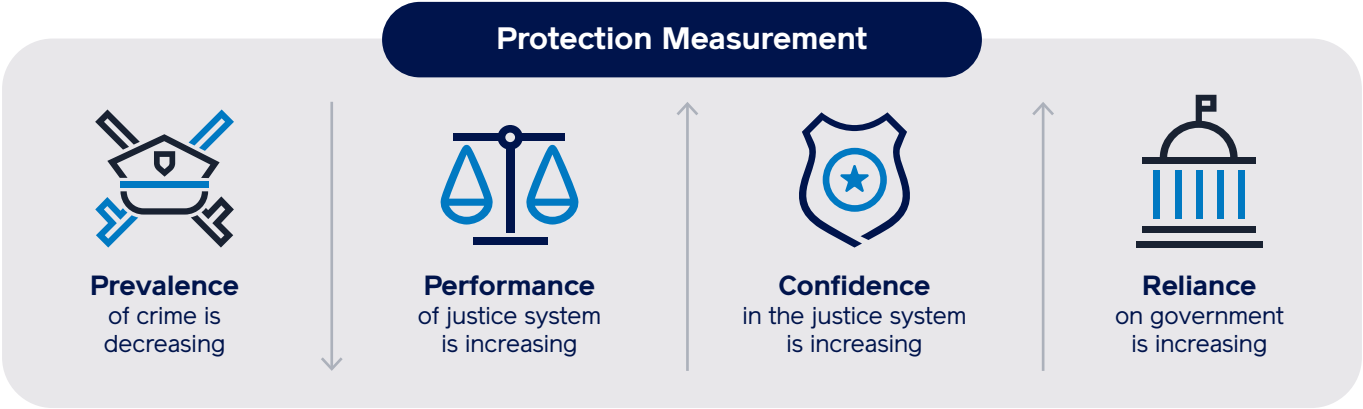


The Protection Measurement Framework tracks the expected benefits of successful IJM projects at both the population and system levels. IJM projects aim to reduce the prevalence of the crime, to strengthen the justice system’s performance on the crime, to increase stakeholders’ confidence in the justice system’s ability to provide protection, and to increase vulnerable people’s reliance on the justice system for protection.

Each project gathers data through research and standardized indicators, allowing teams to analyze the impact of interventions over time and identify connections across measurement domains.

Figure 3: IJM’s Protection Measurement Framework

*Protection* is the array of benefits that accrue to people in poverty through a strengthened justice system



Prevalence is the measurement domain that focuses on understanding the impact of IJM's programming on the scale of targeted crimes in specific geographic locations over defined time periods. The theory of change suggests that increases in performance, confidence, and reliance ultimately lead to decreases in prevalence. IJM typically commissions its own prevalence studies at the start and end of its programs, almost always designed, implemented, analyzed and reported by academic or private research organizations, such as the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham.

Prevalence studies are expensive, time-consuming, technically demanding, and risky. The hidden, networked nature of trafficking crimes requires advanced methodologies; the presence of perpetrators calls for security precautions; the risk of harm to vulnerable people necessitates robust ethical protections; and the political ramifications of researching state power usage demand careful relationship management and communication.

Yet, despite these complications, IJM finds both the prevalence studies themselves and the insights they yield to be uniquely beneficial investments. The prevalence studies themselves can bring together diverse actors from government, business, civil society, donor, technology, and other sectors; identify and solve definitional and technical issues that might otherwise go unaddressed; foster relationships that extend beyond the study itself; and deepen practitioners' exposure to and understanding of methodologies.

Prevalence insights can counter misinformation or disinformation regarding the scale and nature of the crime; accelerate the refinement of policies, programs, practices, and priorities; inform advocacy and media campaigns; and invigorate further research.



# Human Rights and Human Trafficking



Prevalence estimation in modern slavery and human trafficking builds on a longer tradition of quantitative analysis in human rights, particularly work done for truth commissions. These efforts have led to methodological advances that improve the ability to estimate gross human rights violations such as extra-judicial killings, disappearances, arbitrary detention, and torture.

The population of victims in these studies is often considered 'hard to reach' or 'elusive' due to the hidden nature of the violations. Methodologies developed in this field aim to overcome the 'fundamental problem of unobservability.' Prevalence estimation projects adopt two main approaches: (1) collating administrative and other lists of potential victims and applying 'multiple systems estimation' (MSE), and (2) combining a sampling strategy with carefully designed survey instruments. Both approaches use a sample from a known population to make statistical inferences about a larger unknown population.

Prevalence estimation projects typically provide a point estimate along with lower and upper bounds, indicating a range of values within which the true number in the population is likely to fall. These studies adhere to the principles of statistical inference, where the estimate and its associated margins of error reflect the most likely total for the population of interest.

The Human Rights Data Analysis Group, initially part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and now based in San Francisco, pioneered efforts in human rights quantification. It developed the 'who did what to whom' model and applied MSE to provide robust prevalence estimations of gross human rights violations in various country contexts. These include the civil war in Guatemala (1979-1982), the conflict in Peru (1980-2000), the occupation of East Timor (1974-1999), the conflict in Kosovo (March to June 1999), the violence in Colombia (1985-2019), and deaths in custody in Syria (2011-2023).

The strength of studies such as these lies in their ability to provide a robust account of macro-level violence patterns within a given country context. They reveal the full nature and extent of the violence, offer a breakdown of perpetrators and geographic distribution, and highlight trends over time. These studies shift the focus from case-based legal approaches to pattern-based statistical analyses, potentially reshaping political narratives and influencing the popular understanding of the period under study.

However, the results of these studies do not serve as a silver bullet nor offer definitive evidence of genocide or other human rights violations. Rather, they provide a solid foundation of evidence that can complement other forms of evidence that are suitable for formal legal adjudication.

Other human rights prevalence estimation studies and projects have used sampling and survey-based approaches targeting specific populations, such as the work carried out by the NGO Physicians for Human Rights on violence during the civil war in Sierra Leone. The results of these studies, similar to those using MSE, provide raw counts and percentages of people who have fallen victim to various human rights abuses.

These statistical methods have also been applied in numerous prevalence estimation studies within the areas of modern slavery and human trafficking. Existing studies typically focus on one or more practices within these definitional categories and use either MSE or sampling and survey approaches to estimate the scale of these issues within specific country contexts or subnational areas.

The quantification of human rights, modern slavery, and human trafficking is not without its critics, however. These critics argue that such efforts are highly reductionist, abstract, and dehumanizing, reducing human experience to a simple set of numbers. Quantification can homogenize, simplify, and obscure the lived experience of victims and survivors. The problem is widely recognized and calls for action rather than further study. Prevalence estimation studies can also be seen as extractive, diverting funding away from critical activities like supporting prosecutions, assisting survivors, and other programs dedicated to combating modern slavery and human trafficking. As a result, there remains unease and skepticism within survivor, scholarly, and practitioner communities about the potential harm such studies may cause.

In response to these criticisms, prevalence estimation studies are grounded in the belief that meaningful social change requires measurement. These studies offer essential baseline data on the nature and scope of modern slavery and human trafficking, provide increased information on perpetrators and victims, map the geospatial distributions of both, and supply methods for tracking progress post-intervention to assess the impact of anti-slavery and anti-trafficking efforts. Understanding the size and scope of the issue enables better policymaking, resource allocation, advocacy, and NGO programming, all of which benefit from integrating MERL frameworks.



Ruby\*, Pampanga, Philippines



# IJM Case Study

## Philippines

**Scale of Harm Policy Wins**

August 2024



## Background

Prevalence estimates are critical to assess the impact of program interventions and the efforts of the government and stakeholders from various sectors.<sup>1</sup> Prevalence estimates for International Justice Mission's program against Online Sexual Exploitation of Children (OSEC) are valuable for informing policy development and resource allocation.

In 2021, IJM partnered with the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham to launch the Scale of Harm study.<sup>2</sup> Scale of Harm sought to estimate the prevalence of a specific crime in the Philippines—the trafficking of children to produce child sexual exploitation material (TCSEM), including via livestreaming. In addition, an External Advisory Council (EAC) was convened to advise on the research, composed of 24 experts from tech, finance, law enforcement, Philippine government agencies, research institutions, and NGOs. IJM also partnered with Filipino survivor leaders as consultants throughout the project.

The Scale of Harm study found that in 2022, nearly half a million Filipino children—approximately 1 in 100—were sexually abused by traffickers to produce new CSEM for sale to offenders worldwide. The results also discovered approximately a quarter of a million adult Filipinos—roughly 3 in every 1,000—were involved in financially motivated CSEM production. Scale of Harm's findings highlight the urgent need for accelerated action to combat the trafficking of children for CSEM production in the Philippines.

The 2023 release of Scale of Harm's findings and recommendations sparked significant discussions, received local and international media coverage, was cited by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.<sup>3</sup> and a Philippine senator,<sup>4</sup> and was referenced in a U.S. congressional hearing.<sup>5</sup> The study also heightened interest in cross-sector collaborations between academia, civil society, and the private sector.

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<sup>1</sup> International Justice Mission and University of Nottingham Rights Lab. *Scale of Harm Research Method, Findings, and Recommendations: Estimating the Prevalence of Trafficking to Produce Child Sexual Exploitation Material in the Philippines*. International Justice Mission, 2023. <https://www.ijm.org.ph/scale-of-harm>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>3</sup> Presidential Communications Office. "Speech by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. at the OSAEC Summit 2024." September 16, 2024. <https://pco.gov.ph/presidential-speech/speech-by-president-ferdinand-r-marcos-jr-at-the-osaec-summit-2024/>

<sup>4</sup> Senate of the Philippines. "Gatchalian Calls for PH Removal from Global Hotspots of Online Child Sexual Abuse." September 20, 2023. [https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/press\\_release/2023/0920\\_gatchalian2.asp](https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/press_release/2023/0920_gatchalian2.asp).

<sup>5</sup> House Committee on the Judiciary. "Children are Not for Sale: Examining the Threat of Exploitation of Children in the U.S. and Abroad." YouTube video, 59:28. September 14, 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7S14zTIRI9c>.

## Multi-Sector Partnerships and Collaboration

A contributing factor in Scale of Harm's success in developing a replicable and scalable methodology was the multi-sector partnerships established between IJM, Rights Lab, and EAC members. The EAC participated in roundtables and consultations, providing expertise and advice on the study's development and implementation.

Its contributions helped co-design Scale of Harm's mixed-method approach, which combined 3,600 national household surveys using the Network Scale-Up Method (NSUM) with data science analysis of secondary datasets from more than 1,500 municipalities. Engaging with the EAC helped identify, discuss, and resolve barriers, gaps, and policy challenges in each sector in addressing trafficking to produce CSEM, including livestreamed content.

Some EAC members also signed agreements to share secondary datasets contributing to prevalence estimation. Data sharing fostered beneficial collaboration between IJM and its partners, including tech companies, allowing them to demonstrate corporate social responsibility.<sup>6</sup> The development of multi-sector partnerships in Scale of Harm was highlighted by the WeProtect Global Alliance in its case study on how prevalence measurement fostered multi-sector collaboration and survivor engagement. The study has sparked global discussions that reinforce actions on its recommendations, including those targeting OSEC demand-side countries.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Fell, I., Torres, C. B., & Rees, S. (2022). "Multi-Sector Partnership Development: A Case for Cross-Sector Engagement Designing a Methodology to Estimate the Prevalence of Online Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Philippines." Manuscript submitted for publication, 2022. International Justice Mission.

<sup>7</sup> WeProtect Global Alliance. "Scale of Harm: Prevalence Measurement, Multi-Sector Partnerships and Survivor Engagement." IJM Case Study. <https://www.weprotect.org/case-study/scale-of-harm-prevalence-measurement-multi-sector-partnerships-and-survivor-engagement/>.

## Philippine Government's Response

From being referred to as a 'global epicenter' or 'hotspot' for OSEC,<sup>8</sup> the Philippines has shifted to becoming a global model for combating OSEC.<sup>9</sup> In response to the widespread issue of OSEC, President Marcos Jr. issued directives in April 2024 mandating intensified efforts against all forms of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC) in the Philippines, including TCSEM and livestreaming.<sup>10</sup> These efforts include enhanced law enforcement activities to protect children involved in OSEC, arrest offenders, and prosecute them, as well as implementing a whole-of-nation approach to combat OSAEC.

In August 2024, President Marcos Jr. further intensified his directive and established the Presidential Office for Child Protection (POCP), dedicated to defending children's rights and providing special protection. This new government office will play a significant role in addressing threats to the well-being of Filipino children, including OSEC cases.<sup>11</sup>

Since President Marcos Jr. issued his directive, IJM has been engaging with key government agencies, including law enforcement, to utilize Scale of Harm's national and local prevalence estimates of trafficking for the production of CSEM in the Philippines. The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) have expressed a particular interest in the local prevalence data, which shows that trafficking to produce CSEM is widespread across the Philippines.

These local prevalence findings provide insights into areas where trafficking to produce CSEM may be more prevalent among municipalities and cities. Scale of Harm's local prevalence data has drawn government attention, helping to identify where to focus resources and advocacy efforts, particularly within local government units. Local government partners are actively meeting with IJM to learn about the Scale of Harm results and recommendations.

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<sup>8</sup> United Nations Children's Fund. 2016. Perils and Possibilities: Growing up Online. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/eap/reports/perils-and-possibilities-growing-online>.

<sup>9</sup> International Justice Mission. "Global Summit Bares Best Practices in Combating the Livestreaming of Child Sexual Abuse." 19 November 2020, <https://www.ijm.org.ph/articles/global-summit-bares-best-practices-in-combating-the-livestreaming-of-child-sexual-abuse>.

<sup>10</sup> Presidential Communications Office. "PBBM Intensifies Campaign Against Sexual Abuse, Child Exploitation." 25 April 2024, [https://mirror.pco.gov.ph/news\\_releases/pbbm-intensifies-campaign-against-sexual-abuse-child-exploitation/](https://mirror.pco.gov.ph/news_releases/pbbm-intensifies-campaign-against-sexual-abuse-child-exploitation/).

<sup>11</sup> Sarao, Zacarian. "Child Protection Office Created in PH Amid Rise in Online Abuse Cases." INQUIRER.net, 9

One key finding from Scale of Harm is the low level of community reporting, which indicates a critical gap that needs to be addressed to better protect Filipino children. Scale of Harm found that community-based cultural norms contribute to underreporting of OSEC. In response, IJM, in collaboration with key government partners, is working to close this gap by engaging local government units in discussions about initiatives for a community reporting campaign against OSEC.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) worked closely with IJM to co-host an OSEC summit in September 2024, attended by President Marcos Jr., who cited Scale of Harm's results. The summit brought together local government officials and stakeholders for a collaborative dialogue on implementing intensified and urgent community responses to OSEC, with a focus on reporting based on Scale of Harm's findings. IJM presented Scale of Harm's local prevalence data alongside a community reporting campaign to emphasize the urgency.

Simultaneously, IJM began meeting with key leaders from local government units in areas with the highest OSEC prevalence estimates to discuss and propose increased efforts to combat OSEC within these communities.

## **Demand-side Government**

Recent notable achievements of IJM's advocacy efforts include the passage of the REPORT Act in the U.S. in May 2024, the U.K. Online Safety Act in October 2023, and the U.S. Senate's passage of the Kids Online Safety Act, which is pending approval in the House of Representatives. Scale of Harm data and survivor voices were central to these demand-side government advocacy efforts. Credible and validated prevalence data has been invaluable to influencing policy in demand-side countries.

### **Germany**

IJM presented Scale of Harm to the German ASEAN Parliamentary Group during a hearing session in the German Parliament. The presentation informed German lawmakers, particularly those with a regular interest in the region and countries like the Philippines. The session discussed the findings to influence Germany's position in critical European legislative debates.

Scale of Harm data also served as the foundation for more than 10 personal meetings with political stakeholders, including the EU Commission, the Federal Ministry of Interior, the Federal Ministry for Family and Youth, and subject-matter experts from the German Parliament. The study's findings



underscored the significance of OSEC and highlighted Germany's responsibility as a demand-side country to increase its efforts in detecting German perpetrators.

The policy officer responsible for the European CSAM proposal participated in the global launch event of Scale of Harm. In June 2023, during an action week in Germany, IJM informed 18 political and 24 civil society stakeholders about the findings and recommendations in a parliamentary reception. IJM also presented the results with an additional 15 political stakeholders and MPs during a parliamentary breakfast.

To amplify the study's impact, IJM shared Scale of Harm with relevant journalists and media outlets during its launch. The study continues to serve as a resource for IJM to approach journalists about media events in the Philippines and internationally. With the support of the team in the Philippines, IJM Germany helped produce a 90-minute documentary on Scale of Harm for French-German Television Channel Arte.tv, which has garnered over 750,000 views on YouTube. Additionally, a major German newspaper covered IJM's stance on an EU-directive amending demand-side sentencing, prominently featuring Scale of Harm in the article.

## Canada

IJM presented Scale of Harm in Canada at a joint event with the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery (APPG) on April 9, 2024, in Ottawa on Parliament Hill. The two-part event consisted of a research briefing and a press conference. Additional materials, including a website, infographics, and the full media package<sup>12</sup> were provided.

IJM led a panel discussion alongside APPG members, sharing the Scale of Harm findings, Canada's role as one of the top four countries contributing to the demand, and solutions to address the crime. The General Consul from the Embassy of the Philippines in Canada, Rea Oreta, joined the panel to discuss the Philippines' efforts to combat this crime.

The event was attended by Royal Canadian Mounted Police from the National Child Exploitation Crime Centre, members of Global Affairs Canada's Anti-Crime Capacity Building Unit, Members of Parliament, Senators, and staff from Public Safety Canada. IJM Canada shared that, "We would not have been able to connect with these stakeholders without the professional, innovative, niche, and ground-breaking research available through Scale of Harm."

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<sup>12</sup> International Justice Mission Canada. "New Prevalence Study Released: Canada's Role in the Online Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Philippines." *International Justice Mission*. [ijm.ca/scaleofharm](http://ijm.ca/scaleofharm).

The Scale of Harm report and launch event led to numerous meetings and events, surpassing the expectations of the Canadian team. Key outcomes include:

- Invitation to provide feedback on FINTRAC's next round of operational alerts for Canadian Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs).
- Invitation to present at FINTRAC's November 26, 2024, event: "Out of the Shadows: A virtual event surrounding topics related to combating and preventing online child sexual exploitation," co-hosted with ECOFEL.
- Invitation to the Philippines Embassy's annual Independence Day celebration.
- Training with the Canadian Center for Child Protection and IJM Philippines on drafting and submitting Community Impact Statements and Victim Impact Statements as part of the sentencing process for Canadian OSEC offenders.
- Meeting with Global Affairs Canada's Anti-Crime Capacity Building Unit to discuss IJM's theory of change and global partners. (GAC is IJM Canada's target for future grant funding.)
- Monthly meetings with Public Safety Canada for dialoging, brainstorming, collaborating and sharing recommendations. They have invited IJM to present to the G7 Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Working Group, where Public Safety Canada holds the secretary role. Invitation to present at the Ontario Provincial Police's annual Internet Child Exploitation Conference, November 18-19, 2024.
- Invitation to submit as a witness for Canada's Online Harms Act, Bill C-63, including recommendations from Scale of Harm and GSN/PSN survivor leaders.

## **Introductory Discussions With Internet Child Exploitation Prosecutors and Law Enforcement**

### **United Kingdom**

In March 2024, IJM's Center to End OSEC, in partnership with IJM UK and MP Sarah Champion, hosted a roundtable to advocate for a stronger UK response to livestreamed child sexual abuse, with a key focus on the Scale of Harm findings. Panelists included representatives from the UK National Crime Agency (NCA), Internet Watch Foundation, SafeToNet, the Rights Lab, and Cassie\* (name is a pseudonym), a survivor leader from the Philippine Survivor Network. The Home Office and the Office of Communications (Ofcom) also provided insights into their efforts to address this abuse. Dame Sara Thornton, the UK's former Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, presented the Scale of Harm findings, citing the urgent need for collaboration and commitment to combat the demand for livestreamed sexual abuse of children from the UK. This event was attended by more

than 50 people, including parliamentarians, members of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Home Office, NCA, Ofcom, and the civil society sector.

Panelists were inspired to support future campaigns aimed at combatting OSEC demand, and a new idea for potential legislation targeting livestreamed abuse emerged from the round table. This proposal is currently being explored by IJM's Center to End OSEC. MP Sarah Champion also offered to raise written questions in the UK Parliament to support efforts to stop OSEC. While one question was submitted, Parliament was dissolved for the upcoming general election before further action could be taken. Nevertheless, the Scale of Harm study has provided a strong foundation for leveraging commitment, support, and action from policy changemakers within the system.

### **Further impact includes:**

- Scale of Harm has been a catalyst for private meetings with two other MPs and ministers to raise awareness of the UK's role in fueling demand for OSEC and to garner support for future policy and advocacy campaigns to combat the demand for livestreamed abuse of children.
- Scale of Harm is referenced in the Rights Lab's written evidence to the UK Parliament on the efficacy of the UK's Modern Slavery Act. It was cited as part of the response to whether the 2015 Act has kept up with developments in modern slavery and human trafficking, both within the UK and internationally. The discussion on the absence of specific OSEC laws and the involvement of British nationals in creating demand for OSEC materials is supported by data from Scale of Harm.
- UK media mentions of Scale of Harm can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
- Scale of Harm was featured in a detailed article on online sexual abuse of children in *The New York Times* on December 7, 2024.

### **Survivor Leadership**

Scale of Harm integrated survivor leadership as a central research component, including survivor consultants throughout the development, design, and validation process. While survivor leadership and voice are core to IJM's projects, Scale of Harm further elevated this approach by building survivors' research skills and professional experience, enabling them to speak into the project's complexity. Survivors' lived experience and community knowledge of exploitation enhanced the research design and implementation,<sup>13</sup> ensuring it was culturally and contextually sensitive to the communities. This input contributed to the effectiveness of the NSUM methodology.

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<sup>13</sup> WeProtect Global Alliance. 2023. "Strengthening the Fight Against Online Child Exploitation: A Call for Action." *WeProtect Global Alliance*. <https://www.weprotect.org/blog/strengthening-the-fight-against-online-child-exploitation-a-call-for-action/>.

Survivors and the Philippine Survivor Network (PSN) have played key roles in shaping the government's response to OSEC. The PSN has utilized Scale of Harm's prevalence data as a credible source to highlight the issue of OSEC nationwide. In 2023, 10 PSN leaders were invited by the Department of Justice's Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) to consult, advise, and help develop policies related to survivor engagement. They met monthly for six months, alongside representatives from organizations and government agencies such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Ople Foundation, National Authority for Child Care, the Council for the Welfare of Children, the Women and Children Protection Center of the Philippine National Police, and Governance in Justice (GOJUST).

The PSN and survivors developed recommendations to ensure that government responses to OSEC and all forms of trafficking in person are informed by survivors' experiences. In May 2024, PSN and IACAT launched national and regional consultations on policies and survivor-informed responses to OSEC and trafficking, with Scale of Harm results serving as a foundation for this engagement.

Survivor engagement in Scale of Harm amplified survivor voices and advocacy, providing platforms for survivors to share their insights, backed by quantitative data and actionable recommendations. As one survivor leader shared, survivor inclusion adds credibility and validation to research studies like Scale of Harm.<sup>14</sup> In another example, two survivors advocated for the findings of Scale of Harm in addressing the United States Congress, urging legislation<sup>15</sup> to consider "Safety by Design" among tech companies to better protect children from OSEC.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ruby (Pseudonym). "More than 'Just Survivors.'" *WeProtect Global Alliance*, 11 October 2023.

<https://www.weprotect.org/blog/more-than-just-survivors/>.

<sup>15</sup> International Justice Mission, "Urge Congress to Protect Kids Online." *International Justice Mission*. <https://www.ijm.org/earn-it-2023>.

<sup>16</sup> Ruby and Joy (Pseudonyms). "Survivors of Violence Need the U.S. to Address Online Sexual Exploitation to Keep Children Safe." *International Justice Mission*. <https://www.ijm.org/news/survivors-need-us-to-address-online-sexual-exploitation-keep-children-safe>.



Lake Volta, Ghana





# IJM and Rights Lab Prevalence Estimation

The Rights Lab has a Prevalence Estimation Team that has completed, and is currently engaged in, several prevalence estimation studies. Each study uses different methods to estimate the prevalence of various types of modern slavery and human trafficking.

In 2014, colleagues from the Rights Lab produced the first robust estimate of human trafficking in the United Kingdom using MSE, which was later used to estimate the number of trafficking victims in New Orleans, United States. In addition to its work on the Scale of Harm project in the Philippines, the Rights Lab is collaborating with IJM on prevalence estimation projects involving bonded labor in India, forced labor and trafficking among cross-border migrants in Malaysia, and human trafficking in Romania and Bulgaria.

These projects clearly articulate the principal research questions, specify the target population, and design data capture, sampling, survey, and estimation techniques to provide the least-biased estimations while minimizing uncertainty. Each project involves deep country contextual analysis, key informant interviews, data collation, and the application of advanced statistical techniques to reduce bias and ensure robust estimations. The projects are also survivor-informed through the formal inclusion of survivors in research advisory groups.

This work has led to the development of innovative geospatial sampling strategies, linked-tracing and chain-referral samples, network scale-up methods (NSUM), 'sibling' survey methods, random forest models for 'out of sample' projections, and co-designed survey instruments. These instruments capture socio-economic and demographic data, as well as indicators of modern slavery and human trafficking, drawing on international standards and domestic legal frameworks.

The Rights Lab's prevalence estimation team is highly interdisciplinary and includes quantitative political scientists, mathematicians, physical geographers, lawyers, sociologists, anthropologists, data scientists, and supply chain management experts. In partnership with IJM and others, this work provides a quantitative evidence base that supports efforts to combat modern slavery and human trafficking.



IJM



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Terence Fitzgerald, Global Vice President  
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To protect survivors, we have used pseudonyms,  
obscured some images, and included images that  
do not depict actual victims where appropriate.  
Consent was gathered for all images.