

# Launch of Child Protection Toolkit for Financial Institutions

*New Child Protection Toolkit equips financial institutions to detect and disrupt illicit flows linked to child exploitation.*

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□ The [International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children](#), Freshfields and FTI Consulting have collaborated to bring together their child protection, legal, investigations and financial crime compliance expertise to create a toolkit – the Child Protection Toolkit – that aims to support the global payments industry's fight against online child sexual exploitation.



□ The Toolkit has been designed in collaboration with, and with the benefit of invaluable support and insights from, banks, money service businesses, electronic payment platforms, law enforcement agencies and regulators around the globe.

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The Toolkit gives financial institutions worldwide the knowhow to fight back against child exploitation.”

*Stephen Kavanagh, ICMEC  
Secretary General*

□ Enforcement and prevention efforts across the industry must aim to keep pace with the growing sophistication and commercialisation of international criminals involved in online child sexual exploitation.

□ The Toolkit's primary goal is to support the financial industry in its efforts to detect, disrupt and deter the use and abuse of the global financial system for online child

sexual exploitation.

□ The launch of the Toolkit is an important evolutionary step in the ongoing and rapidly evolving fight against online child sexual exploitation. It aims to encourage meaningful change by fostering close, cross-border and cross-sector dialogue and collaboration across the financial industry, recognising that bringing together diverse views and perspectives and unified efforts can result in the greatest impact. The Toolkit is intended to be a creation that, over time, will be refined through real-life user experience and feedback as market payment systems and technology further evolve.



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The International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (“ICMEC”), global law firm Freshfields, and crisis and transformation advisory firm FTI Consulting—in collaboration with global financial institutions, law enforcement agencies and regulators around the world—have developed a Child Protection Toolkit to support the financial industry in its efforts to combat online child sexual exploitation facilitated through the international financial system.

The Child Protection Toolkit’s immediate objective is to assist financial institutions—whether global banks, money service businesses, or fintech platforms—in their efforts to detect and prevent money flows that may be connected with online child sexual exploitation. Successful detection and prevention of illicit money flows, together with related, targeted law enforcement efforts, should make it more difficult for wrongdoers to benefit from their wrongdoing and, over time, deter misconduct.

The Child Protection Toolkit seeks to raise awareness amongst the key players in the market (financial institutions, law enforcers and regulators, amongst others) of online child sexual exploitation, how it arises, how it is commercialised, who the key players are, and the money flows and financial patterns that may be consistent with misconduct, by consolidating key information in one place.

The scale and systemic nature of the problem is stark. Unlawful activity takes place in a long list of jurisdictions, and no jurisdiction appears to be immune. In the Philippines alone, for example, a study published in 2023 by the Philippines’ Anti Money Laundering Council suggests that transaction reports related to suspected online child sexual exploitation surged 150-fold between 2018 and 2022, a period that began before the COVID-19 pandemic up to the tail end of that pandemic in 2022. With the continued rise of digital technologies and virtual assets, the potential for exploitation will only grow—making awareness, unity of purpose, and coordinated

action more critical than ever.

Ultimately, financial institutions are critical gateways to, and nodes in, the global financial system. So, supporting them at the forefront of their efforts to identify and disrupt illicit financial flows is essential to combatting online sexual exploitation of children. Success, however, depends on strong and consistent collaboration across disciplines and borders. A close partnership around the world between financial institutions, law enforcement agencies, and supporting organisations such as ICMEC, can be a powerful force that hinders the ability of criminals to benefit from such crimes. The Child Protection Toolkit provides a shared foundation for understanding and action and aims to foster that collaboration and partnership.

While the global community continues to make progress, more can and must be done, and done quickly. Regulators recognise that money laundering can never be completely prevented and eliminated but expect financial institutions to do everything that they reasonably can towards minimising it. Every tainted transaction or money flow that is identified, prevented and then reported to law enforcers can potentially make a difference. Every little bit counts. One child missing, abused, or exploited is one too many.

We extend our gratitude to the following financial institutions who have provided valuable input during this project and remain valued partners in our efforts towards our common goal: ANZ, Citigroup, Inc, HSBC, Mastercard, PayPal, and Western Union.

We further extend our gratitude to the following law enforcement authorities / regulators who have provided valuable input during the course of this project and remain valued partners in our efforts towards our common goal: AUSTRAC, Australian eSafety Commission, New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs, Philippines Anti Money Laundering Council, and Department of Special Investigation, Thailand Ministry of Justice.

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Interested to find out more about becoming involved

If you represent a financial institution and are interested in how you can use the Child Protection Toolkit to help your institution combat online child sexual exploitation, please contact ICMEC at FIToolkit@icmec.org for further information or simply to discuss what would be involved.

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