

Home » Briefing Room » Justice News

JUSTICE NEWS

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Japanese Citizen Sentenced to 17 Years in Prison for Participating in International Child Pornography Ring

WASHINGTON – A Japanese citizen was sentenced yesterday in Los Angeles to 17 years in prison and lifetime supervised release for conspiracy to advertise child pornography, Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney André Birotte Jr. of the Central District of California and Assistant Director in Charge Steve Martinez of the FBI’s Los Angeles Field Office announced today.

Futoshi Tachino, a Japanese citizen most recently residing in Winnipeg, Canada, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Virginia A. Phillips. In March 2011, Tachino, 32, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to advertise child pornography. Tachino was arrested in Chicago in July 2009.

The sentencing is the result of an international investigation into the “Lost Boy” online bulletin board. The Lost Boy bulletin board, according to court documents and proceedings, was dedicated to men who have a sexual interest in young boys and was established to provide a forum to trade child pornography.

Federal authorities, working in conjunction with a coalition of international law enforcement agencies, shut down the Lost Boy bulletin board approximately three years ago. As a result of the investigation, 16 named defendants, including Tachino, were charged in the United States and arrested for their roles in the bulletin board. To date, 15 defendants have pleaded guilty or have been convicted at trial, and one defendant died in custody.

Approximately six more men have been charged with child molestation as a result of the investigation. The investigation also led to the identification of 27 domestic victims of child abuse, some of whom were portrayed in images posted to the Lost Boy bulletin board.

According to court documents and proceedings, law enforcement authorities discovered the Lost Boy bulletin board after receiving information from Eurojust, the judicial cooperation arm of the European Union. Eurojust provided U.S. law enforcement with leads obtained from Norwegian and Italian authorities indicating that a North Hollywood, Calif., man was communicating with an Italian national about child pornography and how to engage in child sex tourism in Romania. Acting on the information from Europe, the FBI executed search warrants that led to the discovery of the Lost Boy network. Further investigation revealed that Lost Boy had 35 members, 16 of whom were U.S. nationals. Other members of the network were located in countries around the world, including Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

According to court documents, Lost Boy had a thorough vetting process for new members, who were required to post child pornography to join the organization. Once accepted, members were required to continue posting child pornography to remain in good standing and to avoid removal from the board. According to court documents, Lost Boy members advised each other on techniques to evade detection by law enforcement, which included using screen names to mask identities and encrypting computer data.

International law enforcement efforts involving European law enforcement, the Brazilian Federal Police and other agencies have identified child molestation suspects in South America, Europe and New Zealand. Three suspects in Romania, one in France and another in Brazil have been charged, and offenders have been convicted

in Norway and the United Kingdom. Law enforcement efforts have also identified dozens of child victims located in Norway, Romania, Brazil and other nations.

The investigation into the Lost Boy bulletin board was led by the FBI and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, in conjunction with the Los Angeles-based Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement (SAFE) Team. The High Technology Investigative Unit of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) in the Justice Department's Criminal Division, along with Eurojust, have provided invaluable assistance during the investigation.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Joey L. Blanch and Yvonne Garcia of the Central District of California and CEOS Trial Attorney Andrew McCormack.

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Criminal Division