
Online paedophilia and child pornography. METER: over 5,700 URLs reported, abuse including of disabled children and babies. Di Noto: “International cooperation required”

“The fight against paedocriminality is a huge challenge”. It is a tireless and relentless commitment. The figures reflect a reality that shatters the armour of indifference and insensitivity". We are talking about "millions of children exposed to sexual exploitation, to the utter devastation of their dignity". On 19 March in Pachino, Siracusa, Father **Fortunato Di Noto**, founder and president of the association [METER ETS](#), presented the data contained in the [2023 Report on paedophilia and child pornography](#) in no uncertain terms. The fight against paedocriminality is a major challenge for METER. For Fr. Di Noto, "online paedophilia is one of the most heinous crimes in the field of transnational crime". For this reason, "the fight against paedocriminality, which is becoming increasingly systematic and sophisticated on the Internet, requires national and international cooperation". "Our societies must be made more aware of the devastating phenomenon of child abuse through prevention, awareness-raising and education programmes," said METER's chairman. **With 613 verified and confirmed URLs, the USA is the country** with the most reports of hosting online child abuse, followed by the Philippines (215 reports) and Montenegro (93). **A total of 5,745 URLs were reported in 2024**, with a significant amount of content being sold on the Deep or Dark Web (parts of the World Wide Web whose content is not indexed by standard web search engines), "which," the Report states, "can be accessed in complete privacy using the Tor browser, which ensures anonymity." Meter - through the World Observatory against Paedophilia (OSMOCOP) - reported a total of 2,110,585 images, 651,527 videos and 1,260 compressed files. Since 2002, Meter has reported a total of 225,316 URLs. **Abuse of disabled people, babies, including with animals.** "Many young people with disabilities," METER denounces in the Report, "are contacted on social networks, deceived and persuaded to provide sexually explicit material, often by blackmail under the threat of disseminating the pornographic material. Disabled minors are exposed to a high level of abuse due to their dependency on their carers, which puts them at risk". **Another worrying phenomenon, known as "paedomama", involves sexual abuse by women and mothers, even against newborn babies.** Child pornography videos featuring animals, especially dogs, are on the rise. Child abuse mostly involves adolescent males, in self-produced videos, including group violence. **The majority of both images and videos are in the 8/12 age group**, with a total of 3,873 internet links tracked (1,649,946 photos, a total of 558,172 videos). This is followed by the 3/7 age group with 1,708 (458,223 photos, 93,151 videos) and finally the 0/2 age group with 304 (383 photos, 173 videos). **In 2023, the association's support and counselling centre for victims of abuse received a total of 220 requests for child protection.** These included 67 cases of online threat (27 cases of online child safety, 20 cases of online grooming, 17 cases of child pornography, 2 cases of internet addiction, 1 case of cyberbullying involving 11 minors); 52 cases of child abuse (26 cases of sexual abuse, 18 cases of past sexual abuse, 3 cases of psychological abuse, 2 cases of witnessing violence and 2 cases of abuse between minors, 1 case of assault). **Support and counselling is also provided through the toll-free helpline (800 455 270). Meetings with schools, families, church realities. METER's professionals met with more than 25,000 teachers, students and family members in 2023** for research projects and scientific collaborations on online safety education, neuroscience, law, developmental age and abuse-related issues: online child pornography, cyberbullying, sexting, sextortion, grooming, body shaming. The association has continued its response to those ecclesial realities that have requested its presence, both for training and sensitisation initiatives, and in response to requests for help and professional counselling. **METER met with 17 dioceses, 1,200 priests, men and women religious, seminarians and 6,000 lay faithful. Alleged victims of clerical abuse (minors and vulnerable adults) who contacted Meter's counselling centre were welcomed and accompanied through a process of**

psychological, psychotherapeutic and legal (canonical and penal) assistance, and referred to the diocesan services for the protection of minors. The Day against child exploitation, indifference and paedophilia was established in 1996 and is now celebrated nationally and internationally from 25 April to the first Sunday in May. This year, the 28th Day will be celebrated in Rome, **in St Peter's Square, on 5 May.**

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