

For immediate release

FORMER CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER CONVICTED OF RECEIVING AND POSSESSING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY.

Montreal, March 30, 2021 - On March 25, a U.S. federal jury found Jean Buteau Remarque guilty of two counts of receipt of child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography. Mr. Buteau Remarque has worked with our organisation in the past and it is with shock, anger and outrage that we learn of his conviction. The IBCR, as an organisation fighting for the rights of the child, condemns these unspeakable acts in the strongest possible terms.

Mr Buteau Remarque was recruited by the International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR) as a coordinator for a project on Strengthening the child protection system in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2015. At the end of his probation period, the IBCR decided to terminate his contract due to collaboration issues within his role.

The recruitment process had been conducted in a rigorous manner, including criminal background checks and references and there was no indication that he had committed a crime. Almost a year after his departure, the IBCR was called as a witness in the federal authorities' investigation of Mr. Buteau Remarque, in which we cooperated fully and without reservation. It is of course unthinkable for our organisation that such acts could go unpunished, and these accusations have offended our deepest values. The fact that Mr. Buteau Remarque did not come into direct contact with children in the course of his activities was certainly a relief, but it does not detract from the ignominy of these acts that have gone unpunished for too long.

Cases of child pornography and sexual abuse against children are increasingly being reported around the world and must never be allowed to go unreported.

While the IBCR already has a child protection policy, guidelines on child participation in its work, a complaints committee and background check processes for all hires, this crisis will push us to continue to strengthen our internal actions and processes. It is our responsibility to ensure that our hiring, training, monitoring, supervision and communication with our staff identify risks and take the necessary steps to minimise them. Similarly, it is important that the complaint mechanisms in place are known to all so that anyone with suspicions can share them and have them investigated.

The case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, an initiative launched in May 2006 by the US Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorney's Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who sexually exploit children, and to identify and rescue victims.

We are extremely grateful for these initiatives to expose, prevent and prosecute criminals who harm children.

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About the International Bureau for Children's Rights

The International Bureau for Children's Rights is a non-governmental organisation that has been upholding the rights of the child for more than 25 years in over 50 countries across Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Middle East. Using an approach that is both participative and sustainable, we work with our partners in the field to promote and protect the rights of children, including those who are in contact with the legal system or affected by a humanitarian crisis caused by armed conflict or natural disaster. We also aim to prevent child exploitation, violence, abuse and neglect in all forms, particularly those involving sexual mistreatment.

In all our initiatives, we ensure that children are protected and given the chance to participate and have their voices heard.

For more information, please contact

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