



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

pedophilia and child abuse material

PRESS RELEASE

3RD of JUNE 2020 11.00 o'clock

Meter National Office - Avola (SR)

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from the page *Meter Onlus di Don Fortunato Di Noto*

EMBARGO UNTILL THE 3RD OF JUNE AT 11.00 O'CLOCK

PEDOPHILIA/METER PRESENTS THE 2019 ANNUAL REPORT: BALANCE OF A WORLDWIDE CRIME. FATHER DI NOTO: REPORTS NEED TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, FIRM ACTION NEEDS TO BE TAKEN.

Avola (SR), 3 June 2020 – an unquantifiable number of photos and videos of abused children. Despite everything, online child abuse material continued to prosper, with growing profits.

Meter Association's Annual Report 2019 about pedophilia and child abuse material is a **balance of a worldwide crime** which requires to be red, deepened, assimilated, understood and to be mentioned. Pay attention to the introduction that clarifies that the reported numbers are not mere statistical results, cold and dead numbers.

They represent and intense and hard work, a constant commitment to fight criminal actions against children who are enslaved, tortured and treated as erotic and sexual objects.

The numbers that *Meter's 2019 Report* highlights as final balance of an annual activity are ruthless: almost 7 million and one hundred thousand photos reported last year, almost double if compared with 2018 when the counter stopped at 3 million and 50 thousand. Videos have remained more or less the same (992,300 against 1,123,793 from 2018), chats have increased (323 against 234) and in 2019 only we found 325 rar. Compressed folders.

A consideration occurs, and we understand its weight and meaning: if Police forces, in different countries worldwide, had taken our reports seriously, maybe they could have contributed to the repression of the dramatic phenomenon of child sexual exploitation!

Maybe they could have traced victims (since many years) enslaved by perverted and dangerous subjects!

Father Fortunato Di Noto presented the Report today with an online press conference, behind schedule than the usual presentation (that normally happens in March) because of the coronavirus emergency.

AN EXPANDING CRIME – Here we come to our work. We summarised the data from the period 2002-2019 thanks to our **OS.MO.CO.P** (*World Observatory against Pedophilia* office which is highly specialized on data research on the Internet and on the processing of traffic flows to contrast pedophilia and child abuse material): **in 17 years we have sent 61,525 protocols**, with 174,731 links reported. OSMOCOPS' data are verified, checked and reported to the competent Police forces and server providers.

Analysing them in detail, the numbers tell that our **listening centre** for the welcoming of abuse victims and of fragility situations, has treated 1,721 cases, we received 29,996 telephone requests and 17,375 reports on our form coming by users (from 2007 to 2019); since 2008 social networks have increased the available space for pedophiles, we count 8,397 reports during 17 years about communities and social networks. Not to mention the Deep Web.

THE DEEP WEB CONTINUES TO GROW – The Deep Web is the dark side of the net, like the one of the Moon everyone knows it is there, but no one has ever seen it. In 7 years, since 2012 there have been 47,421 reports. It is an impressive and increasing number, simply because it allows to move easily, something that the “Public” Net does not. It is a jungle where one can operate and act in total freedom at a point that it is difficult even for the Police to intervene and operate. Often actions are late with respect to the technology used by the pedophiles. An example? Timed links: a collection with photos or videos of abuses is located on a certain address and will be active for only 24 hours. That is too short to have the time to intervene.

16 MILLION OF PHOTOS IN 6 YEARS – Since 2014 the horror picture has become even more accurate: thanks to our platform for the monitoring of the web we could strengthen the research. This translated in 16,003,014 reported photos, 3,469,196 reported videos, 12,610 mega storages and 1,022 pedophile chats reported.

WHAT TO DO TO PROTECT CHILDREN? – There are two perspectives about online pedophilia: on the one hand there is the belief that child pornography Websites represent a virtual way to satisfy one's desire, on the other hand the belief is that it is just a way to push the Net user pedophile to what had remained dormant until that moment. Chat rooms provide numerous risks of harassment and grooming for children; as a matter of fact, although there is a physical distance between the two interlocutors, it is easy to remove the age and cultural differences that do usually put limits in a face to face relation between children and adults. The Internet often represents a useful tool to pedophiles in an initial phase of contact with minors as it permits them to put in place a kind of “soft” verbal harassment or to approach the minor and foster a real meeting with him, without exposing themselves. The Net offers children wonderful opportunities of growth and of discovering of the world around them, but it also hides dangers that need a particular attention from parents. It is necessary for parents to stay close to their children, to guide them on the Net and to learn their slang so they can better understand the interests and the world where children live in.

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THE GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF THE LINKS: 30 NATIONS INVOLVED – On the podium of 2019, the Island of Haiti in the Caribbean Sea in Central America is at the first place with 640 links (.ht domain); at the second place France with 484 links (.fr domain); at the third place New Zealand with 410 links (.nz domain). It is clear that this is a worldwide phenomenon, no continent is immune, there are 30 nations involved. It often results from the analyzed links that, although it does geographically belong to a nation, the extension contains services which are provided by servers located in other parts of the world (usually in America or in Europe), as emerges from the charts of server's geolocation in the next pages. That means that a user which resides in a determined continent can register a domain that does geographically belong to a State of another continent. This makes us understand how complex the Web is, and how users are totally free to act on the Internet without geographic boundaries.

AMERICA: HAITI, COLOMBIA, BELIZE – Continent after continent, here is America: 847 reports for Haiti (640), Colombia (206), Belize (1). Nothing from Canada and USA.

OCEANIA: NEW ZEELAND, PALAU, MICRONESIA – In this continent the podium is made of New Zealand (410 reports), Palau (90), Micronesia (69). Followed by Tonga (60), Tuvalu (20), Wallis e Futuna (15), le Isole Cocos (12) e Tokelau (5). Total 681.

EUROPE: FRANCE, RUSSIA, ICELAND – Here we are in the old continent: 644 reports with France (484), Russia (47), Iceland (32). Followed by Montenegro (27), Greece (25), Albania (21), Netherlands (3), Italy (2). The European Union closes with Guernsey and Poland with 1.

ASIA: BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN, VIETNAM, PAKISTAN – In Asia we find a part of the overseas British territories: precisely the British Overseas Territory of the Indian Ocean, instituted in 1965 which hosts the USA base Diego Garcia, that was used for the B-52 during the war in Vietnam, just to give a reference to the readers. We have 284 reported domains, followed by Vietnam with 11, Pakistan with 7 and Japan with 4. Total 306.

AFRICA – SAINT ELENA, LYBIA, ASCENSION – We finish with the 33 reports from Africa: Saint Elena (21), Lybia (8), Ascension Island and Gabon with 2.

VICTIMS? THE MOST REQUESTED ARE IN THE 8-12 AGE GROUP – if we look at the links that we monitored and reported during 2019, the trend of the most requested victims – assuming that pedophilia regards the abuse of children aged 0 to 13 – is the 8-12 age group with 5,742,734 detected photos; followed by the 3/7 age group (1,321,969), and in the end the 0/2 age group (7, 646).

When we talk about the 0/2 years age group we are talking about children of a few day. This is the phenomenon of Infantophilia, which *Meter* reports since many years.

For the videos we have the same trend: 715,926 reported for the 8/12 age group, followed by 272,363 for the 3/7 age group and in the end 4,006 for the 0/2 age group. There is a problem: it is impossible to detect the real age of some children because they are not clearly visible in the material that *Meter* reports to Police forces and server providers.

DEEP WEB, THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG – the Deep Web links reported in 2019 are 272. The deep web (the hidden side of the internet) is an open space where criminal associations from all over the world expand their traffics. This phenomenon has exponentially moved in this unmanageable free zone which makes it difficult for police forces to intervene immediately. In order not to nullify its monitoring activity, *Meter* has shifted its attention to the research and cataloguing of computerised archives in the deep Web. The deep Web is a submerged area of the Net which is very difficult to individualize and explore. This is why police forces of all states should cooperate with each other; in this way they would avoid the loss and waste of vital information in an immediate fight against the pedo-criminal web, and bring to the release of children involved in this obscene violence market.

The monitoring of online pedophilia still continues to be ignored by political forces which have no interest to put this important fight against pedophile crime in their agendas. All what is not done is for sure at the expense of young victims: people remain silent, waiting for other minors to be involved in this atrocity, because remember that the Web does not rest or stop. We are waiting for who has supervision and justice responsibility to act so that whatever happens on the Web every day will not remain silent. We also expect the same sensibility from common citizens because children represent the future for us all.

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WERE ARE SERVER PROVIDERS LOCATED? IN EUROPE AND AMERICA – Important data emerge from the monitoring, detected also in the past years. The charts of the geographical location of servers highlight that Europe and America are the cradle of most of the companies that manage the server that allow many sites or platforms where child abuse material is spread. With other words, to use a metaphor: the cars (the websites) do all have different plates from all over the world, but in reality, they are physically located in Europe and America. These are interesting data because it makes us understand the economic mechanism which lies beneath.

Analyzing the chart of geolocation of servers of Asia, Africa and Oceania it is easy to comprehend that the presence of servers in states located in these continents is almost irrelevant. Oceania has set to zero the links located in its geographical area; we remind that the .to domain (of the island of Tonga) gave a high number of links in the past years. We highlight the important cooperation that has born between *Meter* Association and the management of the domain extensions of the lands situated in the Pacific Ocean, this has brought to an important action of repression and control. It would be desirable to create an international collaboration network to put at least a brake to the exchange of child sex abuse material. We are conscious that online child sex abuse material is an enormous plague which bleeds with innocent lives, but we can not accept that nothing or little is done to stem this phenomenon. As we can see in the charts in these pages, the prominent role of Europe and America remains unchanged; those are the continents of richness, of wealth, but also of profit from illicit material.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WEB GIANTS – From the data we have seen specific responsibility emerge for the giants of the web, and they can nor escape from them appealing to an extreme privacy protection. Domain registries and website, file-sharing platforms' administrators have the responsibility to supervise

the material that circulates under their names; if it is true that they have no control on the material uploaded by their users, it is also true that they have the power to have such material removed and, if the law in their country allows it, they can also provide the competent authorities with the IP address of those who uploaded and/or downloaded it. What makes us worry the most is the lack of action of who is in charge, despite the reports there is no effective repression action. There is no organisation of common operations to drive this phenomenon out, and if some investigation is done, it rarely reaches the hoped epilogue of the individualisation of the responsible people and to a possible conviction. Furthermore repression is made even more complicated since many countries do still not have a legislation which specifically deals with child abuse material or computer crimes linked to such phenomenon. The same happened for the localisation of the victims, which is the hardest intervention challenge against this hideous phenomenon.

LISTENING AND FIRST WELCOMING CENTRE – Besides the web, *Meter* does also take care of welcoming the suffering ones. In the last 17 years our listening and first welcoming Centre has received 10,039 phone calls and provided 1,721 consultancies among our national office. In 2019 *Meter's* Listening Centre has welcomed 142 help requests. Those who turned to *Meter* to be listened and oriented do mainly come from Sicily (96). The higher relevance of the Sicilian territory derives from the fact the National Office resides there, and from a higher possibility to meet. Lazio, Calabria and Lombardia follow. In 2019 it is possible to observe new kinds of discomforts. Part of them is linked to the sexual sphere, particularly help requests for relatives belonging to sexual sects; another part is connected to new technologies, especially to the phenomenon of Hikikomori, which refers to youngsters who decide to shut themselves in their rooms, for months or years, with the only company of technological tools and of the internet.

TELEPHONE REQUESTS – In 2019 telephone requests for various reasons have been 385. Most of them came from Sicily (215 calls), Lazio (78), Lombardia (19) and Campania (19).

TRAINING, SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY – The Training and Educational Complex offers many services. In 2019 113 meetings were held in Italy and abroad; 2,521 meetings from 2002 to last year. Only in 2019 we met 12,819 people. Among the treated topics pedophilia, education, bullying, inclusion, discomfort and disability. In schools we met 4,220 students, 938 teachers, 100 families and 550 university students.

THE CHURCH - *Meter* was born as a catholic reality embedded in the life of the Church; every year the cooperation becomes more and more synergic and participated. As proof of such cooperation, during 2019 Father Fortunato has been appointed as representative for the Diocese of Noto at the Regional Service for child protection by the the Sicilian Episcopal Conference CESI (CESI); they also nominated him as person in charge for the regional listening desk. In 2019 *Meter* has continued its presence in ecclesial realities who asked for it, both for training and for sensitisation, and to answer to help requests and specialized counselling requests. Topics covered in meetings deal mainly with childhood, particularly with pedophilia and pitfalls of the net. From 2002 to today 85 dioceses have been met, 13 in 2019.

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THE “PLAN” OF *METER*’S ACTION AND THE COMMITMENT OF THOSE WHO ARE ON THE SIDE OF CHILDREN

COURAGE. Act with audacity to report and contrast those who abuse children, weak and vulnerable people, harming them. Act with no fear for those who want to impede us to operate to free children from the slavery of abuse.

JOURNEY. Walk around the streets (also the digital ones) where children involved in the storm of abuses shipwrecked. Walk even when it seems that there are uncrossable mountains and barriers, when it seems that nothing changes, because of negationist ideologies about abuse and indifference.

EDUCATION AND PREVENTION. Act on the cultural level for prevention and the sensitisation of consciences. Educate the society and the Church to be indignant and get over indifference. Educate to look beyond the walls of their stereotypes and fragile confidence.

SYNERGY. Operate “side by side” to defeat the evil, overcoming jealousies and the elitism of the professionals of abuse. Elitism which exclude and not include in the common commitment. Act at the side of various educational agencies, because it is in the co-responsible action that common and shared aims are reached. To be on the side of the youngest, of minors must not divide: you don’t win when you are alone or fragmeneted.

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