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**The Human Trafficking Legal Center and Ropes & Gray LLP Release Practice Guide
*U.S. Legal Remedies for Minor Victims of Sex Tourism and Sex Trafficking***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Human Trafficking Legal Center and Ropes & Gray LLP today announced the publication of a new practice guide, “U.S. Legal Remedies for Minor Victims of Sex Tourism and Sex Trafficking.”

The PROTECT Act, a federal law adopted in 2003, makes it a crime for a U.S. citizen or permanent resident to travel abroad to sexually abuse children. A Ropes & Gray pro bono legal team, collaborating with the Human Trafficking Legal Center, conducted extensive research on federal criminal and civil cases brought against abusers since the law’s passage.

As of June 2018, federal prosecutors had brought at least 68 criminal cases under the PROTECT Act for actual or attempted sexual abuse of children overseas. Victims brought 11 civil cases in federal courts in the same period.

The research revealed that defendants prosecuted for extraterritorial child sex abuse have included teachers, orphanage staff, U.S. government contractors, doctors, Peace Corps volunteers, religious leaders, missionaries, and non-governmental organization (NGO) staff. U.S. citizens and green card holders have traveled to the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Honduras, Haiti, as well as other countries, to sexually abuse children.

Martina Vandenberg, president of the Human Trafficking Legal Center, said, “The Human Trafficking Legal Center asked Ropes & Gray to spearhead this project after receiving requests from concerned anti-trafficking advocates on the ground in Asia. Advocates requested a practice guide on methods to hold foreigners accountable for sexually abusing children. Sadly, based on the cases they are seeing, sex tourism ranks high on their priority list.”

Sarah Bessell, staff attorney at the Human Trafficking Legal Center and co-author of the practice guide, stated, “We hope that this publication will be used widely to hold perpetrators accountable. This abuse must stop.”

“Understanding how the law applies to these cases is critical to determining the best legal strategy for survivors,” said Martin Crisp, an attorney in Ropes & Gray’s New York office. “The guide is designed to serve as an educational tool and a resource for developing legal guidance.”

The Human Trafficking Legal Center continues to track all PROTECT Act cases stemming from abuse committed abroad. (The law can also be applied for abuses that occur on U.S. soil). The organization hopes to see a surge in both civil and criminal cases brought in U.S. federal courts.

Generous funding from the Freedom Fund and the Jewish Women's Foundation of the Greater Palm Beaches supported the research and publication of this fact sheet.

The Human Trafficking Legal Center connects human trafficking survivors with highly-skilled pro bono attorneys nationwide, holding traffickers accountable for their crimes through civil litigation and criminal restitution. The Human Trafficking Legal Center maintains databases of civil and criminal federal trafficking cases filed in the United States. The organization conducts in-depth research on human trafficking trends and victims' rights. For more information, please visit www.htlegalcenter.org.