

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Mindy Mizell/ International Justice Mission

Global Public Relations Director

Cell: (202) 355-3690/ Email: [mmizell@ijm.org](mailto:mmizell@ijm.org)



**IJM**

## **Sex Trafficking Crackdown at Super Bowl Highlights Global Crisis**

- Human rights agency combatting sex trafficking and violent crime worldwide applauds local authorities for efforts to curb trafficking before Super Bowl
- Globally, 4 billion live outside the protection of the law leaving them vastly more vulnerable to violent crimes like sex trafficking and forced labor slavery
- Nearly 30 million children, women and men trafficked into modern slavery (both sex trafficking and forced labor ) – enough to fill every seat at the Super Bowl every day for a year
- New book *The Locust Effect* reveals disturbing link between sex trafficking and other forms of violent oppression and threats to ending poverty

(January 28, 2014) Washington, DC – With less than a week before the 2014 Super Bowl, International Justice Mission (IJM), a human rights agency that partners with local governments to rescue victims of sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression worldwide, is applauding efforts by local authorities to combat sex trafficking before the game. IJM says trafficking is a devastating global enterprise not unique to the Super Bowl – and that, globally, it is the poorest people who are most vulnerable to being victimized.

“It’s encouraging to see local authorities taking sex trafficking seriously and raising awareness of this important global issue. The truth is that sex trafficking isn’t just a once-a-year problem but an everyday reality for millions,” says Gary Haugen, president and CEO of IJM. “When we are concerned about trafficking in our own communities, we demand that law enforcement respond to apprehend traffickers and bring relief to their victims. This is exactly what the millions of people trafficked today around the world need as well.”

IJM points to global studies revealing more than 4 billion people live outside the protection of the law – leaving them vastly more vulnerable to violent crimes like sex trafficking. (UN) An estimated 600,000 to 800,000 children, women and men are annually trafficked across international borders (U.S. Department of State) and nearly two million children are in the commercial sex trade worldwide. (UNICEF) After drug dealing, trafficking ranks as the second largest criminal industry and one of the fastest greatest growing global enterprises in the world today.

On February 3, 2014, IJM is announcing a new global campaign aimed at raising awareness of “everyday violence” and urging for support in helping petition the United Nations to prioritize justice reform in 2015 Millennium Development Goals.

IJM says “everyday violence” increasingly threatens not only the safety of billions of people worldwide but undermines development efforts aimed at ending poverty. “Everyday violence”

is defined as common, criminal violence generally already against the law and includes crimes such as rape, sex trafficking, forced labor, land grabs and police brutality.

“Everyday violence blocks the road out of poverty. When we think of poverty in the developing world, issues such as health, education, access to clean water and economic empowerment are top of mind,” says Haugen. “What we have failed to recognize is that endemic to being poor is an overwhelming vulnerability to violence.”

IJM points to further reports revealing 30 million men, women and children are held in slavery today. (Walk Free) In addition, only 1% of aid from USAID and World Bank has historically been designated to help improve justice systems to protect poor people from everyday violence.

“Thirty million people is enough to fill every single seat at the Super Bowl every day for a year,” said Haugen. “If the world continues to ignore violence as a significant threat to the poor and refuses to invest in repairing broken justice systems, criminal activity will only continue to destroy the lives of the poorest - while undermining the hard work being done to end poverty today worldwide.”

IJM aims to secure **100,000 signatures** through its new online petition urging the United Nations to make protecting the poor from everyday violence a priority. The petition specifically calls on the UN to include targets in its post-2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to secure accessible justice institutions that are independent, well-resourced and respect due-process rights for everyone.

This call to action coincides with the release of *The Locust Effect*, authored by Gary Haugen and Victor Boutros. The book is a culmination of two decades of work in some of the poorest communities in the developing world and identifies a hidden link between everyday violence, poverty and broken justice systems that the authors say *plagues* many impoverished communities worldwide.

All author royalties from sales of the book go toward fighting violence against the poor. To sign IJM’s online petition or learn about how you can help visit [www.thelocusteffect.org](http://www.thelocusteffect.org).

### **About International Justice Mission**

*International Justice Mission is a human rights agency that secures justice for victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression. IJM lawyers, investigators and aftercare professionals work with local officials in 18 communities throughout Southeast Asia, South Asia, Africa and Latin America to secure immediate victim rescue and aftercare, to prosecute perpetrators and to ensure that public justice systems – police, courts and laws – effectively protect the poor. Learn more about IJM at [www.IJM.org](http://www.IJM.org)*