

Beat: News

Toronto Man Sentenced for Operating Dozens of Brothels in Three Countries

Zongtao Chen aka Mark Chen

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USPA NEWS - A Canadian man was sentenced to federal prison today for his leadership role in an international sex trafficking organization operating dozens of illegal Asian brothels in the United States, Canada and Australia.

Zongtao Chen aka Mark Chen, 49, of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, was sentenced to 24 months in federal prison and three years' supervised release.

According to court documents, Chen led a criminal enterprise that recruited women, primarily from China, to travel to the United States and elsewhere to engage in prostitution and other sex trafficking activities. The organization employed dispatchers who would receive incoming requests for "dates" from potential customers. The dispatchers would coordinate and schedule dates with women working in the various brothels.

On November 15, 2018, a federal grand jury in Portland returned a two-count indictment charging Chen and four co-conspirators with conspiring to use and using interstate facilities to promote, manage, establish, carry on, or facilitate a racketeering enterprise. On March 4, 2022, after being extradited to the U.S., Chen pleaded guilty.

U.S. Attorney Scott Erik Asphaug of the District of Oregon made the announcement.

This case was investigated by FBI Portland's Child Exploitation Task Force (CETF) with assistance from Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents in Omaha, Nebraska. The Toronto Police Service provided assistance. The Justice Department's Office of International Affairs worked with law enforcement partners in Canada to secure the arrest and extradition of Chen to the United States. Participating CETF member organizations include the Portland Police Bureau, Beaverton Police Department, Tigard Police Department and Clackamas County Sheriff's Office. It was prosecuted by Julia Jarrett, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

The FBI CETF conducts sexual exploitation investigations, many of them undercover, in coordination with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. CETF is committed to locating and arresting those who prey on children as well as recovering and assisting victims of sex trafficking and child exploitation.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

Source: Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Oregon press release June 9, 2022

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

UPA United Press Agency LTD

483 Green Lanes

UK, London N13NV 4BS

contact (at) unitedpressagency.com

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