

WHAT IS FINANCIAL SEXTORTION?

Financial sextortion occurs when predators coerce minors into sending sexually explicit images and then demand money to keep those images private. These predators are financially motivated, often operate transnationally, and primarily target teen boys. Financial sextortion predators are organized, determined, and deliberate — often taking images, such as profile pictures of another minor to create fake personas on social media, gaming platforms, and other apps, to communicate with potential victims. They then build trust and lure victims to share sexually explicit images. Once the images are obtained, the predators threaten to release the images to the victim's friends, family, or even the broader public until they obtain payment. Predators have demanded various forms of payment – mobile payment, wire transfers, gift cards, and cryptocurrency. In some instances, demands, threats, and harassment have been so severe predators have encouraged victims to die by suicide.

*Financial sextortion is a **global threat**. In particular, law enforcement has observed an exponential increase in the number of reports of predators in **West Africa** targeting children in the United States. For example, from FY21 to FY23, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) saw a **14,000 percent increase** in CyberTipline reports of predators in Côte d'Ivoire using financial sextortion to exploit U.S. children.*

REPORT SUSPECTED FINANCIAL SEXTORTION

- If you suspect a child might be a victim of financial sextortion, call the Know2Protect Tipline 833-591-KNOW (5669) and fill out the online National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) CyberTipline form at report.cybertip.org/reporting.
- If you suspect a child faces imminent danger, call 911 or your local police immediately.
- If you or someone you know has been affected by financial sextortion, visit [Take It Down \(https://takeitdown.ncmec.org/\)](https://takeitdown.ncmec.org/). This is a free service to help remove online nude, partially nude, or sexually explicit photos and videos taken before you were 18.

Source note: HSI investigative data is compiled from FY22, FY23, and the beginning of FY24. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is the global clearinghouse for all issues related to child exploitation and it operates the CyberTipline, the nation's centralized reporting system for the online exploitation of children. The public can make reports, and electronic service providers are Congressionally mandated to report suspected online enticement of children for sexual acts and child sexual abuse material found on their platform to NCMEC.



In the case of **Côte d'Ivoire**, over the past two years, HSI has received over

4,300 CYBERTIPLINE REPORTS

of predators from Côte d'Ivoire using financial sextortion to exploit U.S. children, primarily teen boys.

From these reports,

561 CHILDREN

have been identified and supported by HSI.



500
BOYS



61
GIRLS



Homeland Security Investigations

To learn more visit: know2protect.gov