

# Ukrainian man who ran international child porn website pleads guilty, accepts 30-year term



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**NEWARK** — A Ukrainian man admitted today in federal court in Newark to founding and running a website that for years allowed customers across the world to view images and videos of children — including infants and toddlers — being sexually abused, authorities said.

Officials have touted the case against 35-year-old Maksym Shynkarenko, of Kharkov, Ukraine, as leading to one of the largest and most successful child pornography investigations in U.S. history.

Shynkarenko pleaded guilty today before U.S. District Judge William Walls to one count of a 32-count indictment that was unsealed in 2012 after Shynkarenko was extradited from Thailand to the United States to face charges. The count to which he pleaded accused him of operating a child-exploitation enterprise in connection with the website, which he ran from 2005 to 2008, authorities say. As part his plea, he agreed to a 30-year prison sentence, they added.

Since Shynkarenko's extradition, officials have hailed the massive investigation that grew out of discovering the website, which officials say they stumbled across in 2005, in part by reviewing emails found on the computer of a Long Branch man charged in a different case.

In a statement released today, U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman said the investigation of the Shynkarenko website known as Illegal.CP — and several related websites — has led to convictions in 47 states of more than 600 Americans — including 30 men in New Jersey — who accessed hardcore images and videos of children being sexually assaulted and abused. A 20-day access pass to Illegal.CP cost \$79.99 and was billed to a user's credit card as if merchandise had been ordered from a website, authorities have said.

"The guilty plea of Maksym Shynkarenko is the capstone to an operation that has led to the imprisonment of hundreds of offenders who traded in recorded images of horrific child abuse and torture," Fishman said. "Because of today's technology, the images of that abuse will be available for years. It's fitting that Shynkarenko will spend the next three decades of his life in a prison cell."

The long-running probe connected to Shynkarenko — who was arrested in 2009 while vacationing in Thailand — included the wiretapping of email accounts and tracking of credit card transactions to identify subscribers, Fishman has said. And those charged in the probe included sex offenders actively molesting children, the U.S. Attorney has added.

Earlier today, Arkady Bukh, Shynkarenko's lawyer, noted after the plea hearing that his client had faced hundreds of years in prison on the many counts, which included charges of child exploitation enterprise, transporting and shipping child porn and money laundering, among others. The lawyer repeatedly said his client was a "technical administrator" of the Ukraine-based website only, and he added that Shynkarenko is "not a child pornographer" and not a pedophile.

"I don't think he ever saw child pornography with his own eyes," Bukh said. "He understands what he did is wrong, he understands it's a great mistake, and that's why he took a plea."

The case against Shynkarenko grew out of an unrelated child porn and money laundering investigation involving Regpay, an internet billing company in Belarus that was charged in an international child pornography operation that reaped millions of dollars in fees charged back to credit cards.

That case led to the Long Branch man and his computer, authorities say.

Newark-based undercover agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement who subscribed to the Illegal.CP site were warned upon signing in that "our site is considered to be illegal in all countries," authorities say. Authorities say a banner page featured more than a dozen images of minors engaged in sexual acts.

It also said, "you are in [sic] few minutes away from the best children porn site on the net!"

## **NEW JERSEY RESIDENTS CONVICTED**

*These are the New Jersey residents convicted and sentenced as a result of the wide-ranging investigation into people who accessed the websites operated by Maksym Shynkarenko, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office:*

- Barks, Edward of Flemington - 78 months
- Bidwell, Richard of Bridgeton - 72 months
- Bogle, Michael of Lindenwald - 51 months
- Bracht, Layne of Matawan - 30 months
- Brown, Michael D. of Jersey City - 51 months
- Burke, Jonathan of Keyport - 33 months
- Cohen, Dr. Larry of Marlton - 55 months
- Dulak, Matthew of Marlton - 9 months house arrest
- Faccibene, Jason of Morganville - 34 months
- Fahey, Brian of Flemington - 41 months
- Fonseca, Francisco of Lodi - 51 months
- Gambale, Vincent of Deptford - 51 months
- Gardell, Jeffrey of Bayville - 46 months
- Hale, Gary of Egg Harbor - 51 months
- Harris, Cory of Vorhees - 26 months
- Knorr, Gene of Somerdale - 41 months
- Lasher, Stephen of Verona - 26 months
- Lutz, Mark of Pompton Plains - 30 months
- McCord, Terrance of Brick - 51 months
- McMichael, Sean of Vorhees - 47 months
- Montemayor, Albert of Pitman - 51 months
- Morales, Eric of South River - 12 months
- Morehouse, William of Kearney - 120 months
- Morgan, Charles of Willingboro - 57 months
- Payne, George of Hoboken - 60 months
- Reagor, Micah of Jersey City - 36 months
- Rigney, Robert of Lakewood - 21 months
- Rosenstein, Dr. Neil of Elizabeth - 51 months
- Santos, Domingo of Morristown - 51 months
- Walsh, Allen of Boonton - 84 months

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