

Father of child porn site owner files suit against son

2020-05-15 : 16:20

By Bahk Eun-ji

The father of 24-year-old Son Jong-woo, who ran the world's largest Darknet child porn site, filed a complaint with prosecution against his son over the concealment of criminal proceeds. The father claimed that his son opened a cryptocurrency account with his personal information without his consent, and concealed the proceeds earned from the website.

He also said Son defamed his grandmother by paying her hospital bills with the criminal proceeds. The father's move appears to be an attempt to prevent his son from being extradited to the United States, where he is likely to face heavier punishment. If Son is punished in Korea for concealing and trading criminal profits, his extradition to the U.S. could fall through due to Korea's double jeopardy rules, which prohibit individuals from being punished for the same crime twice.

Son was scheduled to complete his prison term April 27, but a court effectively prevented his release by issuing a detention warrant.

The extradition hearing will be May 19, and the court will make a decision within two months. Once a decision is made in the extradition trial, no appeal is allowed in Korea. If the court decides to extradite Son, the justice minister will give final approval to arrange for the U.S. authorities to come to Korea within a month to take him into custody.

Son was arrested in March 2018 in a joint operation between the Korean police and the U.S. and British authorities. The U.S. Department of Justice requested his extradition last year.

A U.S. federal grand jury indicted him in 2018 on nine charges including producing, advertising and distributing child pornography, as well as conspiracy and money laundering. However, in accordance with Korea's double jeopardy rules, only the charges of money laundering were brought into consideration in relation to extradition.

Under the U.S. Money Laundering Control Act, offenders face prison terms of up to 20 years and a fine of up to \$500,000 while the criminal penalties in Korea are relatively low with prison terms of up to five years or a fine up to 30 million won (\$24,390).

According to the prosecution, Son ran the site, which had 1.28 million subscribers, from July 2015 till March 2018. Through the website, which contained more than 250,000 videos amounting to around 8 terabytes of data, he earned over 400 million won (\$325,000).

Son's possible extradition recently gained public attention as Korea arrested more operators of online sexual exploitation businesses. A public petition was submitted to the presidential office, demanding his extradition to the U.S. It has collected more than 200,000 signatures.



Gettyimagesbank