

Top court to boost child protection



Supreme People's Court holds a press conference on June 1. [Photo/cnr.cn]

A system to connect courts and other authorities to better protect children from serious harm is expected to be expanded across the country, China's top court said on Thursday.

The system improves communication between courts and governmental departments such as civil affairs bureaus and public security authorities. Its aim is "to speed up the process of handling cases involving children age 17 or under and to increase protection when juveniles are attacked", said Ran Rong, a judge at the No. 1 Criminal Tribunal of the Supreme People's Court.

Ran said a test program has been conducted in more than 10 intermediate or district people's courts in the country, including in Shandong and Sichuan provinces.

"We've got lots of experience in solving domestic violence and sexual abuse under the joint force," she said. "We've decided to expand the system to all courts nationwide as quickly as we can."

Under the system, for example, schools and hospitals in Qingdao, Shandong, have been ordered to report evidence or information to public security departments when it appears children have been sexually assaulted, according to a statement from the top court.

“Police officers must file and investigate a case in line with the evidence without hesitation. This is to ensure it becomes a part of judicial procedures and keeps the children involved from being attacked again,” Ran said.

A similar system to protect children at risk is also undergoing improvements in Beijing. In May, the capital’s top procuratorate signed a framework agreement with several departments and agencies, such as schools and social security organs, to create a network to identify minors in danger.

The top court is also trying to establish databases in Sichuan Province of left-behind children and people with criminal records involving sexual abuse of children, “hoping to give juveniles more effective and targeted protection,” Ran said.

Between 2013 and 2016, the nation’s courts heard 10,782 cases involving adults accused of sexually assaulting children, according to the top court.

“We’ve also given stricter punishment to offenders who sexually abused girls under the age of 12 in line with the revised Criminal Law,” said Guan Yingshi, the top tribunal’s deputy chief judge.

Li Yi, a repeat offender in Hunan Province, was recently executed after the court sentenced him to death for raping and sexually abusing 14 girls of 6 or 7 years old, some of them multiple times.

“Li Yi lured the girls to an apartment of his father’s, to stairwells or hilly areas in the countryside and committed the crime 26 times from 2009 to 2011,” Guan said.