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# Alleged child sex abuse case most disturbing ever encountered says WA Police Commissioner

THU AT 2:23AM



PHOTO WA Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan said it was the most disturbing case he had seen in his career.

ABC NEWS: ANDREW O'CONNOR

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The case of a 13-year-old girl allegedly sexually abused by eight men is the worst case of child sex abuse he has ever encountered the Western Australian Police Commissioner says.

The eight men, one of whom is the girl's father, face more than 500 charges relating to

abuse of the girl over a two year period, from when she was aged 11.

The abuse came to light after a member of the public raised concerns about the girl's well-being.

Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan said it was the first time he has come across abuse at this level.

"The breadth of what we've seen...I certainly haven't encountered [it] in my time as a commissioner, and even beyond that as a police officer. I can't remember something at this level," he said.

"This is an unusual, and difficult circumstance. This is a very long case, it has been going on for two years we believe."

Mr O'Callaghan said if not for the tip off it was possible the abuse would still be occurring.

"It is critical if you are aware of children who are being abused that we know about it," he said.

"Most of our work is based on information from the public...if we can get the information, we can get the results.

"And this was a very good result based on somebody who was a member of the public, who was concerned about what they saw, and they reported it to us and we've been able to protect a young child."

## Parents need to know cyber predators out there: O'Callaghan

The commissioner said even though people might find the case abhorrent, it was important parents understand that cyber predators were targeting children.

"I can't think of an offence that is more abhorrent than abusing children.

"I can understand why the public might think this is unfathomable because it is something beyond the comprehension of the average person that something like this could happen.

"But it is important that people understand what their children are doing online.

"There are cyber predators out there who will groom children who will get them to do things online or even meet them.

"This is a terrible case, but it is a reminder there are people out there who will prey on children and we need to make sure we are vigilant, particularly online.

"Online child exploitation is not isolated, we know there is a global movement, so children surfing the internet needs to be monitored."

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