

## NATIONAL

# US Citizen Held on Suspicion of Debauchery

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A US citizen was arrested Saturday in a Phnom Penh guest house on charges that he sexually assaulted two young boys, Municipal Chief of Foreigner Police Pol Phiethey said Sunday.

Municipal police arrested Michael Lewis Clark, 69, in the Pycos guest house in Daun Penh district. When police raided Clark's room, they found two naked boys, ages 10 and 13, Pol Phiethey said.

He said police had been investigating Clark for some time. "We arrested him because we have enough evidence," he said.

Two guest house employees said police raided Clark's room

about a half-hour after he rented it. They said they did not call the police, but rather that police followed Clark there. Both employees declined to be identified.

The employees said that although Clark often took young boys to the guest house, they never called the police, fearing reprisals from their manager.

Pol Phiethey said the suspect does not live in Cambodia but had been a frequent visitor since 1998. The guest house employees said Clark had been a regular since 2000 and that he usually rented a room for about an hour once or twice a month.

A worker from the Mith Samlanh/Friends NGO, who asked not to be named, said the NGO and the Action Pour Les Enfants

NGO had been investigating Clark for some time.

"We have investigated him for about a year because he brought children to have sex many times, but we did not have enough evidence," the worker said. When the NGO received a tip that Clark had taken the boys to the guest house, they notified police, the official said.

US Embassy spokeswoman Heide Bronke confirmed that the suspect is a US citizen and that embassy officials have visited Clark.

Clark is in police custody and will be charged with debauchery in Phnom Penh Municipal Court late today or Tuesday morning. Debauchery carries a sentence of 10 to 20 years in prison.