

NATIONAL

US Citizen Arrested for Sex With Children

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THE CAMBODIA DAILY

A US citizen was arrested Monday in Phnom Penh for allegedly having sex with minors, the second foreign national arrested on suspicion of sex crimes in less than a week.

Police say they seized pornographic photos from the apartment of Richard Arthur Schmidt, 61, from the US state of Maryland. Schmidt shielded his face from reporters as police searched his residence Monday afternoon.

He was taken to Phnom Penh Municipal Court for questioning but has not been charged.

"We confiscated one of his cameras with pictures of naked boys," said Municipal Foreign Police Chief Pol Phiethey. "Some documents were erased from his computer before police arrived at his room."

Hang Vibol, country director of the NGO Action Pour Les Enfants, said agents from his organization saw Schmidt picking up a young boy at the riverfront around 10 am Monday before reporting him to police.

"We have evidence but not enough yet," Pol Phiethey said. "We are searching for these underage boys."

Two of Schmidt's neighbors said that they had seen young

boys and girls at the suspect's home.

"Many boys and girls come to his apartment every day," said a neighbor who claimed he had lived near Schmidt for about a month. "Those children said he was their godfather."

Police said the case remains under investigation and they had no further details.

In a separate case, prosecutor Yet Chakriya questioned Olivier Frenoy, a 34-year-old tourist from France, for several hours Monday for allegedly having sex with young boys. Frenoy will return to court for further questioning today. Police said they found him in a Phnom Penh guesthouse Friday evening with two boys, ages 14 and 15. According to Pol Phiethey, Frenoy, who had entered the country several times in the last year, confessed to having sex with the two boys and taking the pornographic photographs of them found in his room.

Darnaudet Thierry, president of Action Pour Les Enfants, said that the boys showed police where to find a digital camera memory card that contained the lewd pictures.

"The boys told police that the French man brought them to his room for oral sex," said Pol Phiethey, adding that the chil-

dren said they have had sex with Frenoy on multiple occasions.

Thierry said Frenoy told authorities that he was sheltering the boys from the cold weather.

"For the French man, we have enough evidence," said Pol Phiethey, presenting a stack of about 60 photographs. "We have plenty of pictures of naked boys."

Action Pour Les Enfants suggested the court charge Frenoy with sex with a minor and possession of pornographic materials, but no charges were made Monday. Thierry said his organization had been following Frenoy's activities since February.

The two boys remained in the NGO's custody Monday, while Frenoy was detained on the order of the Municipal Foreign Police.

Action Pour Les Enfants was also responsible for leading authorities to the arrest of Ernst Ivankowitsch, a 73-year-old Austrian man who was discovered in November with a naked young girl in a Phnom Penh guesthouse.

Municipal Court Judge Kim Sophorn dropped charges of debauchery against Ivankowitsch later that month.

Action Pour Les Enfants is in the process of appealing that case, Thierry said. *(Additional reporting by Dhyana Levey and Luke Reynolds)*