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Official Defends Release of Accused Pedophile

BY PRAK CHAN THUL
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THE CAMBODIA DAILY

A senior Interior Ministry official on Tuesday defended his wife's decision as director of the Lighthouse Orphanage to bail out a British national who was detained Friday on suspicion of sexually assaulting children at the center.

Ky Kim Long, deputy secretary general of the National Authority for Combating Drugs, said he supported his wife, Chea Savy, and her decision to bail Michael Leach, 44, out of police custody after 10 hours of questioning over abuse complaints lodged by five children from the orphanage.

"I know the story because we are husband and wife.... If [Leach]

were also given land outside the

was wrong, nobody would protect him," Ky Kim Long said.

Keo Thea, deputy chief of the municipal anti-trafficking and juvenile protection unit, said Monday that Leach is accused of abusing children at the orphanage and masquerading as a doctor.

Deputy Prosecutor Nget Sarath said Tuesday that Leach's case was submitted on Monday to Chief Prosecutor Ouk Savuth, who will decide whether to charge him.

All evidence has been submitted to the chief prosecutor, including girls' underwear and a school uniform found in Leach's hotel room, he said.

Ouk Savuth refused comment Tuesday.

were answered by the guard.

Interviewed at the Lighthouse Orphanage on Monday, where he was invited to return by center manager Bin Long after release, Leach admitted to impersonating a doctor and examining children.

In a letter Tuesday, Leach alleged that one of his child accusers had lodged a complaint against him following suggestions by human rights workers.

To support his claim that he posed as a doctor for altruistic reasons, Leach wrote "I work alongside DFID [Britain's Department for International Development], and I attend meetings of United Nations agencies."

A British Embassy official who declined to be named refuted Leach's claim regarding the DFID.