

# US National Arrested for Alleged Child Abuse

BY KUCH NAREN  
AND ELIZABETH TOMEI  
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A US national living in Phnom Penh was arrested Saturday following allegations of child sexual abuse, anti-trafficking police and a US Embassy official said Monday.

Michael Joseph Pepe, 53, was arrested at his home in Tuol Kok district on Saturday morning and is being detained at the Ministry of Interior's anti-human trafficking department, said Un Sokunthea, director of the anti-human trafficking department.

US Embassy spokesman Jeff Daigle wrote in an e-mail Monday that officials from the embassy and the US Department of Homeland Security had assisted Cambodian police with their investigations into allegations against Pepe, adding that possible charges under the US Protect Act are pending.

"The US Embassy commends the Cambodian authorities for their swift reaction to these allegations of child sexual abuse," Daigle wrote.

The Protect Act allows for US citizens who commit sex crimes against children abroad to be de-

ported and charged with a crime in their home country.

"He is being detained at the anti-human trafficking department for more questioning," Un Sokunthea said.

"[T]here are more suspects involved in this case," she said, adding that police had also found incriminating materials in the suspect's home.

Kol Channarith, director of human resource management at Pannasastra University, said on Monday that Pepe was a part-time professor of management at the school from May 2003 to July 2005.