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The *Chai Hour* first gained

police commit the same crime.

Suspected Pedophile Rides Into Police Barricade

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THE CAMBODIA DAILY

A 50-year-old suspected pedophile crashed his motorbike into a police barricade in an attempt to evade arrest on Sothearos Boulevard in Chamkar Mon district on Friday, police said Sunday.

Police identified the suspect, a US national, only as Michael John. He was arrested on suspicion of molesting numerous underage girls, said deputy municipal anti-trafficking police chief Keo Thea, who was injured in the crash but was back at work Sunday.

"Michael John rode his bike fast and crashed with our police motorbikes, injuring my legs," Keo Thea said, adding that the suspect would be sent to court on Monday.

"He confessed that he had sex

with many underage girls, paying them \$10, \$15 or \$20."

Keo Thea added that the suspect had lived in Phnom Penh for approximately six years working as a guitarist. "He used to play music at the Martini bar a few months ago, but he stopped," said Beatrice Magnier, director of NGO Action Pour Les Enfants, which collaborated with police on the two-month investigation.

Representatives of Martini Pub Restaurant could not be reached Sunday.

"First we saw him with one little girl by the riverside," Magnier said. "I think that there are many girls," she added.

At the time of the suspect's arrest, two girls aged 12 and 14 were in his rented room and four more girls, all under 12 years of

age, were waiting outside, Magnier added.

Liv Sovanna, lawyer for two of the victims, alleged that the suspect had both oral and penetrative sex with the girls repeatedly, confirming police reports that he had paid between \$10 and \$20 for sex and had given one victim a mobile phone. She added that the suspect had one valid passport and one fake one.

Police confirmed that one passport appeared to be counterfeit.

The six girls present at the time of the arrest were from the impoverished community near the Russian Embassy in Tonle Bassac commune, said Pek Vannak, children's rights monitor for local rights group Licadho, which is now helping to care for one of the victims.