

Court Gives Convicted Child Pimp 15 Years

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Phnom Penh Municipal Court on Wednesday sentenced a 36-year-old man to 15 years in prison for procuring four girls in some of the most notorious child sex-abuse cases of 2006.

Presiding Judge Sao Meach also ordered Thach Mey to pay \$2,000 in compensation to the girls, who range in age from 12 to 14 years.

Though Thach Mey was arrested and charged in February with human trafficking, prosecutor Sok Kalyan moved that the court find the defendant guilty of pimping because he believed the defendant only took a commission for providing the victims' sexual services rather than forcing them to have sex.

Speaking in broken Khmer, Thach Mey—a Vietnamese national, according to court officials—

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—SOK KALYAN,
PROSECUTOR

denied the charges.

“I didn't know anything,” he said. “I didn't do it. If I did it, I would accept [punishment].”

Bun Kong, Thach Mey's court-appointed defender, moved that charges be dropped for lack of evidence, saying only the victims' testimony identified his client.

However Sok Kalyan said the vic-

tims' testimony was conclusive.

“According to the answers from the victims, the sex with the foreigners occurred following advance preparations by this charged person,” he said.

Four girls testified Thach Mey had taken them for sex with foreign men on as many as seven occasions.

At trial, judicial officers did not mention the names of the men who had sex with the girls, and Sok Kalyan said the investigation had not focused on them.

However Peng Maneth, a lawyer with the French anti-pedophile NGO Action Pour Les Enfants and counsel to the victims, said the girls had been provided to American Donald Ramirez, 60, who shot himself while in police custody in November, as well as two Germans and another American all since convicted of sex crimes.