



ACTION POUR LES ENFANTS

PRESS RELEASE

Sihanouk Ville, April 10, 2006

Topic: Belgian national arrested on April 8, 2006 in Phnom Penh and German national arrested on April 10, 2006 in Sihanouk Ville, both on charges of child sexual abuse.

Belgian national:

The Belgian national, 46, was arrested late Saturday evening by the Phnom Penh Anti- Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Unit in cooperation with *Action Pour les Enfants (APLE)*.

APLE opened this case 3 months ago in Sihanouk Ville, however also monitored his activities in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and in Banteay Meanchey, where the victim's family resides.

The boy victim, aged 13, has testified as to having been sexually abused by the Belgian accused on a number of occasions. The child has been supported by this man since 2001, initially through a local Ngo. However, in 2005, the accused visited the victim's family in Sisophon District, furthering this relationship of support by buying a piece of land whereon a new house was built for the family. Since that time, the accused has periodically returned to Cambodia, staying with the family in the family home, or taking them on holidays around Cambodia.

The Belgian national confessed to having sexually abused the child whilst staying at the family home and in numerous Guesthouses throughout Cambodia during their travels.

German National:

The German national has been living in Sihanouk Ville for several years. *APLE* has been monitoring this case for 5 months. However, he was only arrested this morning by the Sihanouk Ville Anti-Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Unit, again in cooperation with *APLE*.

4 boys are involved in this case: 3 of them have testified that they have been abused by the German national, whilst 1 gave a witness statement. The youngest victim being 12 and the oldest is 14. They are all street working children and were therefore enticed by monetary benefits in exchange for sexual gratification.

Both the German and Belgian nationals have been accused of 'debauchery' under Article 8 of the 1996 Law on the Suppression of Kidnapping, Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings.

The Cambodian police arrested both suspects based on the results of investigations done by *Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE)*. *APLE* is an international NGO that conducts field investigations and gives legal assistance to victims of child sexual abuse. The Belgian is the 26th, whilst the German national, the 27th foreigner arrested in Cambodia on the basis of investigations conducted by *APLE*.