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DECISIVE SENTENCE HANDED DOWN IN CAMBODIAN SEX TRAFFICKING CASES INVOLVING TEENAGE VICTIMS

*International Justice Mission investigators and lawyers present cases of girls trafficked and sexually exploited
and win three strong court victories*

WASHINGTON, DC January 18, 2005 – Last week a Cambodian court handed down two ten year prison sentences and one 15 year sentence to individuals found guilty of sexually exploiting teenage girls in two separate cases. "This is a critical point in Cambodia's fight against trafficking when in recent weeks there has been good cause for concern about the seriousness of the commitment within the country. I'm hopeful these convictions are but one of many signs to come that Cambodia is indeed determined to abolish slavery," said Sharon Cohn, vice president of interventions for International Justice Mission.

Pich Horn, a brothel keeper and Chin Dara Tra, a pimp, were found guilty of exploiting three teenage girls who were regularly drugged and beaten at the brothel and forced to have sex. The girls were sold to the brothel keeper who forced them to work off the amount for which they were purchased. Each time they were drugged, the cost of the drugs would also be added to their debt. International Justice Mission investigated the girls' cases and worked with local law enforcement to rescue the three from the brothel and placed them in a safe aftercare facility. Each of the girls bravely testified in court in front of the perpetrators. Horn was found guilty in absentia of Trafficking and sentenced to 15 years. Tra was found guilty of Pimping and sentenced to ten years.

In another case, Chang Mihong was found guilty of Trafficking and sentenced to ten years in prison. International Justice Mission provided testimony of the trafficking and sexual exploitation of a 15-year-old girl earlier rescued by IJM from a brothel. The judge deliberated for a brief ten minutes prior to handing down the verdict.

"It's important to send a strong message to traffickers, brothel keepers and pimps. We must change the calculation of risk so those who prey on vulnerable women and children will decide it simply isn't worth it. The most effective way to do that is to send perpetrators to jail." Said Gary Haugen, founder and president of International Justice Mission. "I want to congratulate the Phnom Penh Municipal Court on these convictions and encourage support from the highest levels to continue to bring justice for victims of trafficking and punish their oppressors."

About International Justice Mission:

International Justice Mission is a human rights organization that rescues victims of violence, sexual exploitation, slavery and oppression. IJM is working in Cambodia training police officers on investigative techniques, evidence gathering and law enforcement procedures to combat sex trafficking. The work of IJM has been featured on Dateline NBC, FOX News, in Forbes Magazine, the New York Times Magazine, Wall Street Journal and other media outlets.

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