



# INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION®

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### **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION RESULTS IN GUILTY PLEA BY CANADIAN TOURIST WHO SEXUALLY ABUSED CHILDREN**

*IJM brothel rescues in Cambodia lead to historic conviction of Canadian man for  
sado-sexual crimes against young children.*

WASHINGTON, DC – June 2, 2005 – By a surprising set of coincidences, video evidence of sex crimes in Cambodia obtained by IJM two years ago made it possible for Canadian authorities yesterday to secure their first conviction under a new sex trafficking law.

Donald Bakker pleaded guilty yesterday in a Vancouver court to 10 counts of sexual assault, seven counts relating to sex crimes against children in Cambodia. Canadian police investigating the case were assisted by International Justice Mission, which earlier conducted a related investigation of sex crimes against children in Svay Pak, Cambodia. In that investigation, IJM worked with local authorities to facilitate raids of several brothels that resulted in the rescue of 37 girls, the youngest of whom was five years old. This raid was covered by a prime time network TV program and aired in the United States and Canada in January 2004. A Canadian officer was watching one of the airings of the broadcast and found similarities between the Bakker case he was investigating and the footage on the program.

At the time he viewed the network broadcast, the Canadian investigator had already viewed confiscated tapes recorded by Bakker of his acts against children. Canadian officials contacted IJM to learn more about the potential connection. IJM cooperated with Canadian officials to provide additional information and evidence leading to the charging of Bakker on multiple counts of sexual assault on children. IJM investigators provided specific information about victims they had rescued who appeared on Bakker's tape, as well as information about victims they had previously investigated but were unable to rescue.

A new Canadian law to stop sex-crime tourism allows Canada to prosecute sex offenses committed by a Canadian on foreign soil regardless of that country's own laws. Before his guilty plea, Bakker was the first person to potentially face trial under the 2002 law. "Vigorous prosecution under this new law will go far to protect children from sex tourists and we are encouraged to see the diligence of Canadian authorities in seeking justice in this case," said Sharon Cohn, vice president of Interventions for International Justice Mission. "This case states it plainly – if you choose to abuse children at home or abroad you will go to jail. The miles you travel from your home to commit these crimes will not insulate you from justice." The Protect Act, the U.S. law on sex tourism, provides for similar prosecutions in the United States.

Bakker will be sentenced in Vancouver, Canada, on Thursday, June 2. Cohn, who participated in the police interviews of the rescued children in Cambodia and heard accounts of what had been done to them, said, "So brutal, violent and

degrading were the crimes that Mr. Bakker committed against these children, that any description of the impact runs the risk of sounding like hyperbole. Be assured that is it not.” Cohn was the lead attorney in IJM’s investigation in Svay Pak, and stated, “In my experience both with the U.S. Department of Justice and with IJM, I have never been involved in a case involving such savagery against children so young. I’m hopeful the judge will hand down a sentence appropriate for the crimes,” Cohn said.

Bakker was arrested in December 2003 after a prostitute was heard screaming in a Vancouver park. Bakker was following her with a bag that contained a video camera and other equipment, as well as footage of violent sexual acts against adult sex workers.

### **About International Justice Mission**

International Justice Mission is a human rights organization that rescues victims of violence, sexual exploitation, slavery and oppression. A multi-national team of law enforcement professionals and a highly qualified legal staff conduct criminal investigations and collect evidence to rescue victims and bring perpetrators to justice. The work of IJM has been featured on Dateline NBC, FOX News, CNN, MSNBC, in Forbes Magazine, the New York Times Magazine, Wall Street Journal and other media outlets. IJM was founded by Gary Haugen who was the Officer in Charge of the U.N. investigation into the Rwandan genocide. **Haugen has just released the book “Terrify No More” which chronicles IJM’s efforts to rescue 37 young girls from a brothel in Cambodia.**

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