

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PO Box 58147
Washington, DC 20037-8147
www.ijm.org

Phone: 703.465.5495
Fax: 703.465.5499
media@ijm.org



AMERICAN PEDOPHILE CONVICTED AFTER CAPTURE IN CAMBODIA

Collaboration between human rights agency, Oregon police and Cambodian authorities results in conviction of Terry Smith

WASHINGTON, DC – July 6, 2007– As a result of an NGO investigation in Cambodia, an American pedophile who has abused children globally has been sentenced to 22 years in prison by a Jackson County (Ore.) court.

Terry S. Smith, 55, was convicted in his native Oregon of two counts of first-degree sodomy, first-degree sexual abuse, using a child to display sexual conduct and two counts of failure to register as a sex offender.

After a seven-year search for the fugitive, Smith's capture in Cambodia was the result of an undercover investigation by the human rights agency International Justice Mission, a global organization of lawyers and investigators that works with local authorities to stop illegal abuses such as sex trafficking and forced labor slavery. IJM received a tip from another organization who suspected Smith of sexually abusing and trafficking young children.

As part of IJM's ongoing efforts to identify and release children who are victims of sex trafficking in Southeast Asia, International Justice Mission investigators conducted undercover investigation at Tramp's Palace in Sihanoukville, Cambodia, in July 2006. Tramp's Palace was owned by Smith and was a known destination for international sex tourism.

IJM's undercover investigation revealed that Smith was brutalizing the girls himself and was preparing them to be sold for sexual assault to other foreigners. The girls found in Smith's bar were estimated between the ages of 11 and 14 years old. IJM investigators recorded undercover video of the girls dancing and being offered for sexual activity. Smith's Cambodian girlfriend, Chea Sovannary, directed the girls to dance for the undercover investigators.

In the course of the investigation, Smith stated to IJM investigators that there were outstanding warrants for his arrest in Oregon.

Based on all of the information and evidence provided by IJM's investigation, Cambodian police, led by police chief Be Sivanna, of Sihanoukville's Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Bureau, arrested Smith on July 31. Smith was charged with debauchery for having sex with two girls, aged 13 and 14 years, at his bar in Sihanoukville.

Through a court order, Smith was released from jail for health reasons on Aug. 31. He then disappeared.

IJM investigators, believing Smith might flee the country, contacted Oregon state police to inform Oregon officials that the Cambodian police had arrested Smith, and to verify Smith's claims of outstanding warrants and whether the warrants were active.

Upon confirming active warrants for child abuse and sexual assault for Smith, IJM investigators worked with the Cambodian authorities, the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Marshal Service to obtain the necessary federal warrant to detain Smith and to prevent him from unauthorized flight to avoid prosecution.

Following the issuance of the federal warrant, members of the Cambodian National Police force arrested Smith on Sept. 20 as he left the U.S. Embassy trying to obtain documents to leave the country.

“Cooperative, global law enforcement community efforts drove this arrest,” said Bob Mosier, IJM Vice President of Investigations. “Smith believed he could flee the U.S. to escape conviction and continue abusing children in Cambodia. He believed the Cambodian authorities would allow this. But he was very wrong. This is a case where NGOs, police and authorities around the world worked together to capture an international fugitive who had abused children with impunity.”

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IJM believes that pursuing the conviction of criminals is one of the most effective tools to deter future crimes by convincing individuals who are trafficking or abusing people that they must stop or face the consequences. IJM has witnessed that even a few examples of judicial convictions and jail sentences for perpetrators can have powerful ancillary benefits; merited convictions send a clear message to all criminals that breaking the law will not go unpunished.

“Convictions change the fear equation: The criminals are now afraid, so victims and potential victims don’t have to be,” said Sharon Cohn, Senior Vice President of Interventions, who oversees all of IJM’s investigative and intervention strategies. "Each arrest by Cambodian police of Western pedophiles reinforces an important message: Pedophiles are not welcome in Cambodia and they will go to jail if they assault Cambodian children."

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. IJM was founded by Gary Haugen who was the Officer in Charge of the U.N. investigation into the Rwandan genocide.

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