

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



CAMBODIAN COURT SENTENCES RUSSIAN NATIONAL TO 13 YEARS IMPRISONMENT FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT OF 14-YEAR-OLD GIRL

In a modern-day David vs. Goliath story, young girl's testimony brings down powerful expat investor accused in 18 other cases of abuse

April 2, 2008 – A Phnom Penh court has delivered a guilty verdict against Alexander Trofimov, a Russian investor with powerful sway in the Cambodian community where he had been living. Trofimov was charged with debauchery with a child under 15. Debauchery is the legal term that covers sexual abuse of children under Cambodian law.

Trofimov was sentenced to 13 years in prison and ordered to pay \$100,000 USD in damages to the victim, who has been living in an aftercare shelter since the abuse. The victim, 14 years old at the time of the abuse, was brought to Trofimov by a Cambodian pimp, who has been sentenced to 11 years in prison for his role in her abuse. Additional charges of debauchery are pending against Trofimov in cases related to 18 other victims, making him the subject of Cambodia's largest-ever pedophilia investigation. Trial dates arising from these charges have yet to be announced.

“The significance of this verdict cannot be overestimated,” said Patrick Stayton, Cambodia Field Office Director for International Justice Mission, the organization whose local investigative staff first brought the case to the attention of Cambodian authorities. “The court’s verdict in favor of the victim is not a deterrent to foreign investors, as the suspect’s lawyer announced. Rather, it is a deterrent to foreign men with power and money who believe that they can use their power and money to circumvent the law, and it is a notice that they will be treated the same as any other criminal.”

The victim escaped Trofimov’s Sihanoukville guest home after four separate incidences of abuse and made her way back to Phnom Penh, where she was referred to International Justice Mission through an NGO partner organization. Based on the victim’s testimony, IJM worked with another NGO to identify several additional underage girls who had been abused by Trofimov. These victims gave statements to IJM staff and the Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection police, which were used to secure search and arrest warrants for Trofimov. As a result of this investigation, Trofimov was arrested on October 17, 2007, at the home he had been renting from the deputy governor of Sihanoukville, Cambodia.

Trofimov was the chairman of an investment company which had been granted permission in 2006 to build a \$300 million resort on Snake Island off Sihanoukville, an area in which the Cambodian government has been attempting to spur development.

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About International Justice Mission

International Justice Mission is a human rights organization that brings relief to victims of violence, sexual exploitation, slavery and oppression. A multi-national team of law enforcement professionals and legal staff conduct criminal investigations and collect evidence, partnering with local authorities to ensure victim rescue and perpetrators prosecution; IJM’s local aftercare professionals assure that victims’ needs are met in the aftermath of abuse. IJM was founded in 1997 by Gary Haugen, former Officer in Charge of the U.N. investigation into the Rwandan genocide.

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