

NATIONAL

Police Question Thai Women Over Siem Reap Cocaine Haul

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Police yesterday questioned two Thai women who were caught at Siem Reap International Airport with a total of more than 11 kg of cocaine concealed in their luggage, an official said.

Lieutenant Colonel Non Sopha, anti-drug police chief for Siem Reap province, said that the women, arrested on Monday, were Yanvan Nopawaraphan, 20, and Chayphan Oraphun, 26.

The pair flew into the airport on a SilkAir flight from Singapore, where they had transited, having begun

their journey in Brazil, he said.

"The authorities [at the airport] suspected them. Why didn't they fly directly to Thailand?" Lt. Col. Sophany said, adding that during questioning, the suspects had confirmed that they were traveling to Thailand with their cargo.

Ms. Yanvan was carrying 6.4 kg of cocaine, wrapped in plastic and cloth inside her suitcase, while Ms. Chayphan's 5 kg of the drug was concealed within the lining of an ice bucket in her suitcase, according to Lt. Col. Sophany.

"The two suspects have confessed their guilt during questioning at the police station, and we

have prepared a case to send them to court for more questioning on Wednesday," he said. "We are searching for their accomplices to arrest them."

The market for cocaine in Cambodia is thought to be minimal and hauls such as Monday's in Siem Reap are likely to be destined for Thailand.

In August, a number of Thai women were arrested bringing crystal methamphetamine and cocaine—a total of nearly 30 kg—into Cambodian airports. In each case, Cambodian police said the women were working for drug traffickers transporting the nar-

cotics to Thailand.

U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) officials have said previously that Cambodia is in danger of becoming a key transit country for drug traffickers, in particular those feeding the growing Thai market for cocaine.

Gary Lewis, UNODC's representative for the East Asia and Pacific region, said in August that "Cocaine use in Thailand is still limited but has expanded considerably during the past few years."

"Most of the cocaine use in Thailand is used by the urban elite—most of whom consider meth use to be a drug for the lower classes."

Commerce Official Denies Luxury Wood 'Logs' Exported to China

BY PHORN BOPHA
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A Commerce Ministry official yesterday denied that Cambodia was exporting luxury wood logs to China, insisting that any wood leaving the country was in a "processed" form.

Analysis of official data from China Customs, by a London-based timber consultant, found that 36,000 cubic meters of luxury timber logs, valued at about \$61 million, has been documented as imported to China from Cambodia since 2007. Although the Chinese Customs data does not pro-

vide an exact definition for a log, it does categorize a log as different to imported sawn wood.

The China Customs data also states that each year, just under 10,000 cubic meters of "logs" and about 15,000 cubic meters of "sawn wood," of all kinds of timber, have been imported from Cambodia to various ports in China since 2005.

Mao Thora, secretary of state at the Ministry of Commerce, insisted that Cambodia only exports processed wood abroad and not rough timber or logs.

"We export processed woods, like beds, that are already made here and they put it together

there," Mr. Thora said of the country's official policy on wood exports.

Commerce Ministry figures recorded 42,000 cubic meters of wood exports, valued at \$54.5 million, under the broad description of "processed wood" in 2011.

Mr. Thora said that Cambodia earns tax duties on processed wood exports, although he declined to say how much.

According to a 2006 subdecree, "logs, whether debarked or not; Crude or rough sawn timber; Squared logs with a thickness or width of more than 25 cm, even when smoothed" are prohibited from being exported

from Cambodia.

According to the China Customs' data, last year, about 9,800 cubic meters of "logs" from Cambodia under the rosewood category, which applies to a broad range of luxury wood species, was recorded by China Customs.

In the first seven months of this year, about 4,300 cubic meters under the rosewood category have been brought into China from Cambodia, the data show.

Since 2007, the official value of imports under the rosewood category from Cambodia was registered as \$61 million by China Customs.

Cambodian in US Finds Siblings Among Photos of S-21 Victims

BY DENE-HERN CHEN
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

A Cambodian man now living in the U.S. has become the first person to successfully identify his family members among a selection of photographs of victims of the S-21 prison camp that was donated to the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) two months ago.

Bo Tep, who up until August 2011 was a professor at the Santa Clara University in California, started searching DC-Cam's online database for his brother and sister's names after he heard about the cache of photographs through the media, said Youk Chhang, DC-Cam's director.

"He heard about the new photos, and he went to our website and found the names of his brother and sister in our database, which means we also have their files already," said Mr. Chhang.

Mr. Chhang explained that after DC-Cam's staff found the biographies of Mr. Tep's sister, Tep Suong Bopha, and his brother, Tep Bun Mony, they cross-refer-

enced them with the photographs in the recently donated collection, and found that they matched.

Mr. Tep confirmed Friday in an email to Mr. Chhang that the photographs were of his long lost brother and sister.

"Thank you for your help in providing the enclosed information about my brother and sister. This enclosed information would provide some level of closure for my family regarding our brother and sister," Mr. Tep said.

Mr. Tep could not be reached for comment.

While many of the photographs of S-21 victims feature visibly terrified individuals clad in black, Mr. Tep's siblings are pictured dressed in casual clothing. Tep Bun Mony, who, according to DC-Cam, was a university student at the time the photo was taken, is seen grinning and wearing a light-colored shirt. And Tep Suong Bopha, who worked at the National Bank of Cambodia, is a short-haired woman in a casual T-shirt.

The biographies for the pair show that they were both arrest-

ed on September 1, 1976. Although prison records state that Tep Suong Bopha and Tep Bun Mony were in fact imprisoned at S-21, the only sign that the photographs were taken at the prison are the tags used to document Khmer Rouge prisoners that are pinned at their necks.

"When you think of Tuol Sleng, you think of black clothing and people looking horrible, but we researchers have seen photos of people in normal clothes. This is usually worn by people who return from abroad," Mr. Chhang said.



Documentation Center of Cambodia

Photographs of siblings Tep Suong Bopha, left, and Tep Bun Mony, right