

## Sex scam puts Kiwi's conviction in doubt

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A New Zealand man serving 20 years in a Cambodian prison on sex charges could have fallen victim to the same scam that resulted in a Swiss man being falsely jailed.

Former aid worker Graham Cleghorn, 55, was jailed in February 2004 and is being held in Phnom Penh's Prey Sar prison. He is serving 20 years for the rape of five teenage girls - crimes he denies.

In October 2002, Swiss hotelier Rudolf Knuchel successfully defended molestation charges brought against him by the Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre, the *Dominion Post* reported.

The centre is the same organisation alleged to have offered five Cambodian girls US\$10,000 (\$15,135) to accuse Cleghorn of rape.

Mr Knuchel, 59, has since received an apology from the Cambodian Interior Minister and continues to live in Siam Reap.

The newspaper said Mr Knuchel was arrested in 2000 on charges including raping two boys, trafficking women and children for prostitution, running a brothel, and drug and organ trafficking.

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He spent 57 days in jail before his lawyer had him freed on bail before a Siam Reap District Court hearing, in which all but the molestation charges were dropped because of a lack of evidence.

At the 2002 trial, one of the boys confessed he had not been molested by Mr Knuchel. The boy's mother took the stand and demanded US\$10,000, which she said had been promised to her by the crisis centre. The judge threw the case out.

New Zealand's Ambassador to Bangkok, Peter Rider, has met representatives from Cambodia's Embassy in Thailand to outline concerns about Cleghorn's case (last month, his appeal was conducted and dismissed without his knowledge). His trial in 2004 took just nine hours.

- NZPA



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