

Gun-incidents notably decrease in the third quarter of 2005

Phnom Penh, November 11, 2005

According to WGWR's daily press monitoring of gun misuse, there has been a notable decrease in gun-related incidents during the third quarter of 2005 in comparison to the first and second quarter of 2005. During the third quarter of 2005, 171 gun incidents were reported in the local press which is a monthly average of 57 cases, while the corresponding figure for the first quarter was 69 per month and 73 per month for the second quarter of 2005.

During the monitored period, there were a total of 189 individuals involved in gun incidents out of which 18% resulted in deaths and 31.8% in injuries¹. Out of this total number whose age was reported, 88.9% were between the ages of 19 and 50 while 5.3% were children, and 5.8% were over the age of 50. Among the total number of persons involved, the gender was only known in 52 cases out of which 27.5% were female. Out of the women involved, 0.5% resulted in deaths and 4.8% in injuries.

The two most common categories of gun-related incidents were robberies and personal conflicts, which accounted for 52% of the total amount of gun incidents. Among the robbery incidents, there were a total of 9 deaths and 19 injuries reported, while the conflicts/vengeances incidents resulted in 6 deaths and 20 injuries. Among the 354 suspected perpetrators of the gun-related incidents, approximately 6 died and 5 were injured and 14.6% were sent to court. Among the total amount of gun incidents, 34.5% of the cases resulted in an arrest of the suspects. In the cases where the perpetrator was not caught, only 25.7% of the cases were followed up by an investigation. The WGWR is dismayed about the low level of prosecution and investigation of gun related incidents.

Among all the provinces and cities monitored in Cambodia during this period, there is a strong tendency that the majority of the gun incidents occur in Phnom Penh. Nevertheless, the overall decrease in gun-related incidents may be a result of the deployment of more traffic police and gendarmeries to reinforce road traffic regulations and tariff levies on vehicles in Phnom Penh during September 2005. The presence of extra traffic police and gendarmeries may have discouraged and prevented some possible gun-related acts.

Though there has been a decrease in the number of gun incidents during the latest reporting period, more efforts need to be done in order to address all remaining gun-related issues in Cambodia. Therefore, WGWR call for:

- The Government to maintain the deployment of its police and gendarmerie to safeguard public security – in particular to deploy its personnel in violent-prone areas around the country.
- The Government should strictly regulate the use of registered weapons and assure punishment of perpetrators of all gun-related offenses according to the arms law.
- For all law enforcement and security officers as well as Cambodian citizens to abide strictly to the arms law.
- For civil society to advocate on behalf of gun victims, and work with WGWR and Cambodian authorities to develop a comprehensive National Action Plan on SALW in order to bring about a long-term and sustainable mechanisms to deal with arms issues in Cambodia.
- For the Cambodian citizens to actively participate in WGWR awareness campaigns (eg Water Festival) to get more knowledge about the impact and negative consequences of gun use and abuse and to learn about their rights and responsibilities under the arms law.

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¹[1] Out of the total number of people involved, 50.2% were neither killed nor injured