

Gun-Incidents notably increased in the first quarter of 2005

1 January 2005 to 31 March 2005

According to WGWR's daily press monitoring of gun misuse, there has been a notable increase in gun-related incidents during the first quarter of 2005 in comparison to the findings for the first quarter of 2004. All in all, 206 gun incidents were reported during the first quarter of 2005 - in average 69 cases per month. The monthly average of gun incidents reported in 2004 for the first quarter was 36.

The two most common categories of gun-related incidents, robberies and personal conflicts, accounted for 76.7% of the total amount of gun incidents in first quarter of 2005. Out of these cases, a total of 293 individuals were victimized by gun misuse. Among the victims whose gender was possible to specify (285), 23.2% were females. Among the 258 victims whose age was reported, 79.8% were between the ages of 19 and 50 while 9.3% were children, and 10.9% were over the age of 50. Out of the total number of killings caused by gun misuse (29), 4 were women, while out of the total number of injured (123), 21 were female. Among the robbery incidents, a total of 8 deaths and 80 injuries were reported, while the conflicts/vengeances incidents resulted in 12 deaths and 21 injured. Although less than fourth as many cases of personal conflict/vengeance were reported as compared to robberies, each case of conflict or vengeance was nearly twice as likely to lead to deaths. Among 228 suspected perpetrators of all crimes, approximately 30 died and 12 were injured during the incidents. In at least 29.4% of reported incidents, authorities came to the scene afterward and took down a report, while in 20.1% of the incidents they intervened and arrest suspects and in 12.3% of the incidents they intervened but did not arrest suspect. Law enforcement authorities intervened and successfully arrested suspects in 4.4% of reported cases while in 32.4% of the incidents were investigating and 3.4% perpetrators were shot dead.

The WGWR gun-incident monitoring during the first quarter of 2005, indicates 7 cases where certain government apparatus (gendarmeries, militia, and bodyguard) committed in personal conflict and other gun misuse cases due to under the influence of alcohol. One example, on March 21, 2005, is a case where armed forces killed 5 people protesting against unjust land possession. Nevertheless, the Cambodian government brought 9 perpetrators from the armed forces to the court in this case. Another case is the 17 prisoners who were shot dead including some injured during a prison breakout on March 23, 2005.

WGWR calls for

- The Government - in particular the police, military police, and local authorities including the court to strictly abide by the existing gun-related laws and prosecute violators consistently.
- National legislators to pass the draft weapons law, and craft specific weapons legislation to eliminate loopholes that allow security forces and powerful individuals to slip through the legal system e.g. draft a law requiring the revocation of the gun and gun license of someone who lends, sells, rents, or misuses his/her firearm.
- Civil society to advocate on behalf of gun crime victims, and work with WGWR and Cambodian authorities to develop a comprehensive National Action Plan to improve Cambodia's security problems at community, provincial, and national levels.

The Working Group for Weapons Reduction maintains a database of gun-related criminal incidents reported in the Cambodian print media. By gathering this data, WGWR hope that concerned parties may better understand the ongoing small arms problem in Cambodia. For details, please contact WGWR's Small Arms Policy Development Program Manager, Mr. Tieng Saman, Tel: (855) 23 222 462, E-mail: wgwroffice@wgwr.org.

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