



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY PHNOM PENH

MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS THE WOMEN'S MEDIA CENTRE TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Australia is working towards an end to violence against women and girls. This fight requires strong global action to ensure that violence does not continue to limit the social, political and economic participation of women in their communities.

To mark International Women's Day 2012, the Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh is pleased to announce that Australia has awarded a grant of A\$79,000 under the Australian Government's 2011-12 Human Rights Grants Scheme to the Women's Media Centre. The Women's Media Centre will use these funds to produce a media campaign aimed at ending community tolerance of sexual violence and rape, and increasing awareness of legal avenues for redress.

Sexual violence is one of the most common forms of gender-based violence in Cambodia. The vast majority of cases go unreported as these crimes are often perceived as private matters by some in the local community. Victims receive little support and instead are often stigmatised by their families and neighbours. Women of all ages, including very young girls, are victims of this tragedy.

This grant builds on the Australian Government's existing programs to support Cambodian efforts against domestic violence. The Australian-funded Cambodia Criminal Justice Assistance Project (CCJAP) is working closely with commune and village safety committees to help them reduce domestic violence in their communities, which is a high priority of the Royal Government of Cambodia. CCJAP will increase efforts to make women police officers the first line of response to incidents of domestic violence, following earlier support to promote the recruitment and advancement of women in the Cambodian National Police at national and provincial levels.

Complementing this work with the formal justice institutions, Australia also supports local NGOs to provide assistance to victims of domestic violence, including: Legal Aid Cambodia, which helps women obtain justice through the courts; Hagar, which works with severely traumatised victims of sexual and domestic violence; and Youth Star, which places volunteers at the village level to help change the attitude of men, women, boys and girls to violence against women in the home and the community.

As part of the 2011-12 Budget, the Australian Government announced that it would invest A\$96.4 million over four years in initiatives to eliminate violence against women and to support women affected by violence in developing countries in Africa, the Middle East, South East, South and Central Asia and the Pacific. Australia recognises that violence against women also remains a problem at home and in 2011 the Australian Government announced a National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children. On 8 March 2012 the Australian Government's Office for Women launched Australia's National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 concerning Women, Peace and Security.

Media Enquiries: Dave Gordge, Deputy Head of Mission, 023 213 470
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