



សមាគមអាជ័យ
ADHOC

OVERVIEW OF

CAMBODIAN WOMEN

BEING TRAFFICKED TO CHINA

DURING THE FIRST SEMESTER OF 2014

REPORT ON

CAMBODIAN WOMEN TRAFFICKED TO CHINA

DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 2014

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OVERVIEW OF CAMBODIAN WOMEN TRAFFICKED TO CHINA IN 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this report ADHOC will detail the situation of women and girls trafficked to China in the first half of 2014. This report focuses on complaints received, on investigations done and victim interventions conducted by ADHOC. The report will analyze factors giving rise to human trafficking and several challenges noted based on reports from ADHOC's 22 field offices and Central Office in Phnom Penh. This report also includes information received from other institutions and organizations working to combat human trafficking.

In the first half of 2014, ADHOC intervened in 108 cases after receiving complaints related to human trafficking, concerning 295 victims. Women were trafficked to many different countries. However, in 26 cases, concerning 29 victims, the destination country for the trafficking was the People's Republic of China, which will be the focus of this report. The report shows that there are both push and pull factors contributing to the trafficking.

Trafficking Cambodian women to China for marriage purposes is usually done through brokers, who have established extensive networks across both countries. The brokers require the women to submit a letter written by their commune chief which confirms they are single. Such a letter is required in order

to be allowed to marry abroad. In many cases the brokers forge these letters. In some cases brokers also forge identification cards, changing the victims' names and dates of birth.

According to victim testimonies, after brokers send victims through Phnom Penh International Airport or overland to Laos and Vietnam (transported by car or truck), they are met by Chinese and Cambodian brokers who sell them to Chinese men. It is also the brokers who are responsible for submitting the letter that confirms the victims are single to officials of the Royal Embassy of Cambodia/Royal Consulate General of Cambodia in China in order to have the letters translated and legalized / validated. Subsequently, the brokers give the letter to the Chinese men so they can start applying for their marriage certificate in order to have their marriage to the victims legally registered.

INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking is a serious violation of human rights. It is an unacceptable form of modern slavery and cannot be tolerated.

Migration through brokers or agencies, who trick and cheat people, is always high risk. People using such services often suffer violence, exploitation and other rights abuses when arriving at their destination country. The victims are sometimes sub-trafficked to another location, often against their own will.

In Cambodia, a lack of skills, education, available job, landlessness, bank debts, low wages or low prices for agricultural outputs are all factors forcing a growing number of Cambodian people to look for a job abroad to support themselves and their families.

In the last ten years, more and more Cambodians, including those with inadequate documents, have migrated to look for a job in many countries around the world, including Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, Singapore, China, Fiji, Mauritius, Micronesia and even South Africa.

Cambodia is still among the countries most affected by human trafficking¹. This is partly due to the Royal Government of Cambodia's ineffective approach to preventing human trafficking.

Labor migration can take many different forms, such as going by oneself, going with the help of relatives or with the help of an agency or broker. Recently, there has been a surge in human trafficking to China where brokers lure Cambodian women into marriage. These brokers have built up extensive networks in Cambodia and in China.

A new complicated form of trafficking is emerging whereby brokers develop networks that systematically try to persuade young women all over Cambodia to 'voluntarily' marry foreign husbands. The brokers subsequently use this opportunity to trade and exploit these young victims. Some women are lured to leave for China on a temporary or tourist visas but on arrival are forced into marriage against their will. Others are sexually abused through the threat of violence and by restricting their freedom of movement. Still others are sub-trafficked.

ADHOC has gathered figures and stories through its 22 field offices, who usually receive the complaints from victims and their families, which are then collated in ADHOC's Phnom Penh office. These figures are only the tip of the iceberg as not all victims are able to make their dire situation known. In some cases, the relatives dare not file a complaint, or the victims in China lack the opportunity to make their plight known.

¹ Report of US Department of State on human trafficking in 2014 available in: <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2014/index.htm>

The situation is deteriorating and of serious concern to ADHOC. With trafficking networks expanding across Cambodia, it is becoming increasingly difficult to investigate and prevent trafficking. This raises the question of what the total number of women being trafficked is?

What the status of these Cambodian women who have been trafficked and married to Chinese men is? And who will take responsibility for these victims?

OVERVIEW OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

According to the figures gathered by ADHOC in the first six months of 2014, there has been increase in human trafficking to China. ADHOC received and intervened in 108² human trafficking cases in total in this period, 26 of which related to Cambodian women in China. There were a total of 29 victims in these 26 cases. These victims were forced into the marriages.

ADHOC notes a dramatic increase in the number of such cases as compared to the last half of 2013. Trafficking of Cambodian women to China stems from both push and pull factors, which will be further identified below.

Push Factor:

Push factors are negative factors that push Cambodian women away from home into migrating abroad. There are many push factors which make Cambodian women decide to leave their home for foreign countries to earn income by looking for a job or getting married to Chinese men.

Poverty: Most trafficked Cambodian women are from poor families which cannot support their livelihoods. The family income largely depends on the income of daughters or grand-daughters, which gives them no other choices but to look for work abroad.

Lack of education: Most women who have decided to go abroad aim to earn income because they are not well educated, which prevents them from earning a decent living in Cambodia. Furthermore, this lack of education, coupled with little information available to them as to the plight of trafficked women means they may be less able to make informed decisions and see the negative points before making a decision to leave.

Lack of local jobs: Lack of jobs and low labor wages, often not enough to support their families, push these women into migration.

²ADHOC's six-month report

Land loss: Another factor pushing women into migration is the loss of land through abusive land seizure of the victim's family's land by businesses, often supported by powerful people connected to the authorities. Others were forced to sell their land in order to support their families, treat illness or pay for their children's education.

Indebtedness: A number of victims' families are indebted to banks or traders as they borrow money to support their families or because they have to borrow money in order to pay for the broker's services. These debts further push the victims into migration as they perceive they will earn more money abroad which will allow them to pay back their debts.

Lack of agricultural product markets: Cambodia is a mainly agrarian society. Over 80% of Cambodians still earn their livelihoods by farming. However, as agricultural production involves making investments and being dependent on external conditions such as rainfall there are high financial risks involved in being a farmer. After a failed harvest, a farmer may be pushed into migrating abroad to earn a living and provide for his or her family.

Status gap: As not everyone is benefiting from the economic development Cambodia is currently experiencing, the gap between Cambodia's rich and poor is widening. The societal and psychological pressures resulting from this widening gap sometimes push poorer Cambodians into deciding to try to leave their country and build a new life abroad.

Lack of information: Access to information is still problematic in Cambodia. The media do not provide comprehensive information on the risks of migration. Often media outlets only emphasize the possible benefits of migration without giving enough attention to risks. This pushes Cambodians to migrate on the basis of limited or false information.

Cambodian tradition and custom: Some victims reported that they accepted a marriage abroad as they believed they would not be able to find a husband in Cambodia. According to tradition, good women have husbands, and having a husband is a precondition for a woman to be happy. Furthermore, daughters are expected to respect their parents and be grateful for connecting them with potential husbands. These values/traditions push women into seeking a marriage, sometimes abroad.

Push and Pull Factor:

Progress of free market: Many Cambodian women increasingly seek materialistic things and modern standards of living. To achieve this they need to generate more income, which they believe they can do abroad.

Influence of the agencies:

Stories of people working abroad and earning high salaries to support their families are widespread. These stories are disseminated by the recruiting agencies through radio, television, social media, newspapers and directly to the community. Because of this marketing, people feel confident that working abroad will allow them to earn more money.

However, they neglect to ask specific information regarding working and living conditions abroad.

CHALLENGES

Forced marriage: Due to being misinformed or being tricked by brokers, Cambodian women decide to go to China in order to marry a Chinese national. After getting married, the victim is required to live with her husband's family. Her passport, relevant documents, money and jewelry are all confiscated and she has to do housework as if she were a domestic slave. She has to serve her husband's family and cannot go out or work to generate income. She is not given enough food to eat, which damages her health. Some victims get sick since they have no money to buy food or medicine, or they do not receive medical services at hospital.

Physical and Mental Torture: In some cases, before engaging in sexual intercourse, a victim's husband uses physical violence and inflicts injuries on the victim's genitals. In other cases, victims are raped or attempted to be raped or harassed by the victim's father-in-law or brothers-in-law. Victims suffer tremendous psychological and physical damage but receive no care whatsoever.

Sub-trafficking: In some instances a victim's in-laws will take the victim to a hospital for medical check-ups after marriage. If the result of the check-up shows that the victim is infertile she is subsequently trafficked on to a brothel to be forced into the sex industry or she is sold to another Chinese man.

Escape attempt: What further aggravates an already troubling situation is the lack of assistance currently provided by the Cambodian Embassy and Consulates in China. According to witness reports Cambodian nationals in dire need of assistance are left outside in the cold by the Embassy and Consulate personnel.

Without access to food and lacking money, these victims are often very scared of being taken back to the families which abused them or fear being arrested by the Chinese police. With their documentation taken from them by their new 'families', arrest might result in a return to the very families they tried to escape from.

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In response to the situation identified above, ADHOC makes the following recommendations:

- We urge the Royal Government to take appropriate measures and develop new strategies to suppress the trafficking of Cambodian women and girls to China;
- To foster better collaboration between non-governmental organizations and relevant institutions in the form of increased cooperation and information exchange in order to save victims and convict offenders;
- We urge the Ministry of the Interior to increase monitoring and support activities related to officials in the provinces and municipalities possibly involved in trafficking;
- We urge the Ministry of the Interior to take immediate measures to prevent woman being trafficked to China under the pretext of a marriage by instructing the commune/sangkat officials not to issue a confirmation letter that the victim is single;
- Further promote and disseminate the possible negative consequences of migrating to other countries, especially to at risk women;
- Increase decent local job opportunities for Cambodian citizens;
- Sign the Memorandum of Understanding on the exploitative trade in Cambodian women between the governments of China and Cambodia as soon as possible and to consult with relevant organizations on the content of the MoU;
- We call on the Royal Embassy of Cambodia/Royal Consulate General of Cambodia in China to facilitate the repatriation of victims;
- We call on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to monitor and support the work of its staff at the Royal Embassy of Cambodia/Royal Consulate General of Cambodia in China related to rescuing the victims.

CASE STUDY 1



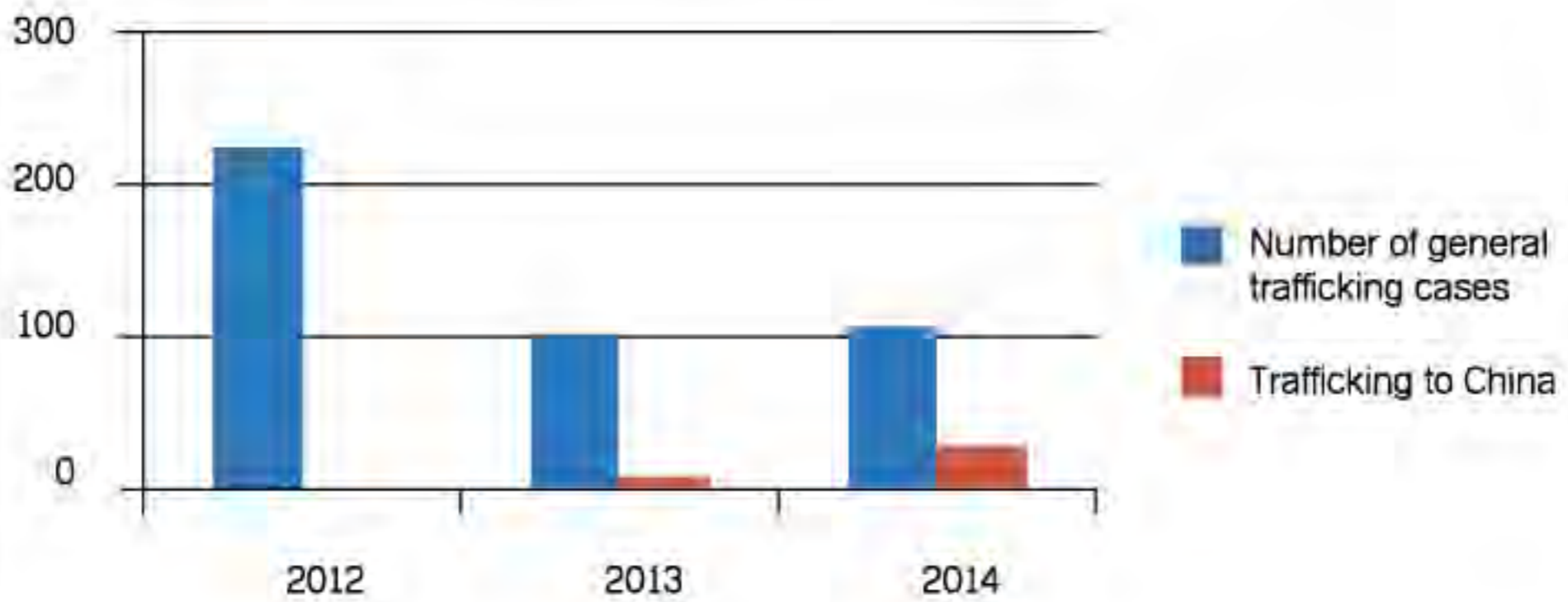
In 2013 a woman named **Kh. S. Ph**, age: 33, residing in Bandak Village, Sdao Commune, Ratanak Mondul District, Battambang Province, migrated to work in China through a broker named Seng, a 44 year old female residing in Prey Veng province. Having worked in China for two months, the broker recommended she get married to a Chinese man. After getting married, her situation deteriorated as the income she generated was confiscated by her mother-in-law and her father-in-law frequently harassed her. She decided to escape and ask the Royal Embassy of Cambodia for help. However, the Embassy officials refused to help her. As she could not go back to her in-laws and had nowhere else to go, she had to live in the forest and survived by eating bamboo shoots. The victim's family contacted the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC) and asked us to intervene on her behalf. ADHOC coordinated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Due to good collaboration between the Ministry and ADHOC, the victim returned to Cambodia on 03 July 2014.

CASE STUDY 2

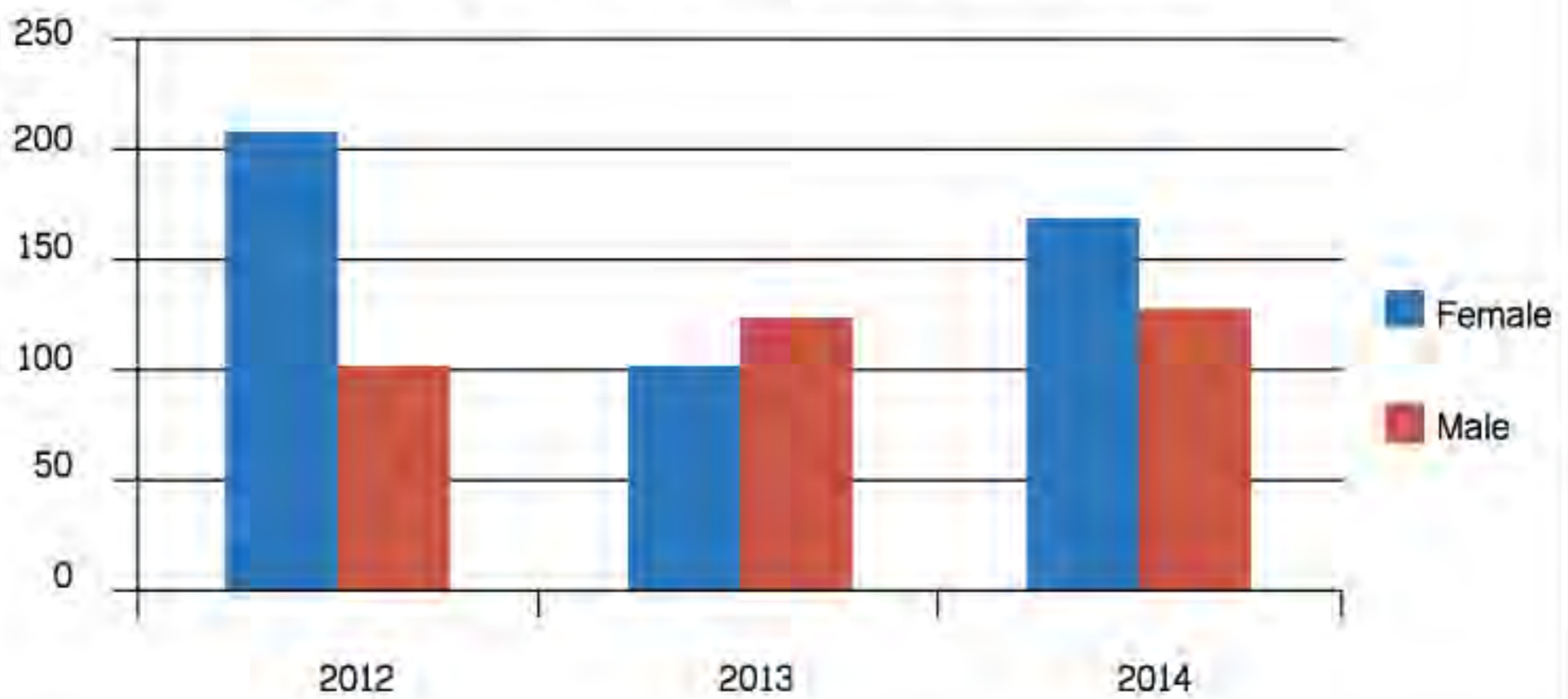


On 09 November 2013, two female siblings named **Ch.S.Or**, age: 25, and Ch.S.Kh, age: 21, were tricked by a broker into taking what the women believed to be an opportunity to work in South Korea. The broker sent them to China. Upon arriving, both siblings were forced to marry Chinese men. After her forced marriage, Ch.S.Or lived with her husband's family where she was regularly threatened and beaten and was not allowed to leave the house. The victim's family contacted ADHOC and asked it to intervene on her behalf. ADHOC coordinated its efforts with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Due to good collaboration, the victim named Ch.S.Or returned to Cambodia on 22 of March 2014. ADHOC is still working hard on repatriating the younger sister. We hope that she will return to Cambodia safely sometime soon.

Graph showing destination of victims of human trafficking during the first 6-months of 2012 to 2014



Graph showing trafficking victims during the first 6-months of 2012 to 2014



REFERENCES

Investigation report of Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association in 24 provinces/municipalities

Law on Labor 1997

New Law on Criminal 2009

Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation 2007

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of their families

Report of the US Department of State on Human Trafficking 2014

Summary Report on Activity and Performance of Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation 2013 and target for 2014

In case you run across violation of human rights,
women's and child's rights, non-judicial dispute settlement,
land dispute, please contact phone numbers and address as follows:

Head office (Phnom Penh)

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Kat Bounng Raing, Khan Daun Penh
Tel : 023 218 653 / 990 544
Fax : 023 217 229
Email : adhoc@forum.org.kh
Website: www.adhoc-chra.org

Batambang office

House 859, Group12, Rum Chek4
Village, Ratanak Commune
H/F : 053 952 829
Tel : 012 970 823 / 011 591951

Banteaymeanchey office

House No.198, Village 3, Preah Ponlea
Commune, Serey Sophoin District,
H/F : 054 958 867
Fax : 054 958 867
Tel : 012 76 52 16 / 015 565 768
: 012 434 612

Kompong Cham office

Village 6 , Vealvong Commune, Kampong
Cham District
H/F : 042 941326
Fax : 042 941326
Tel : 011 742 445 / 012 728 018
: 016 757 861

Kompong Thom office

11, St. Prachea Teapatay, Kampong
Thom Commune, Steung Sen District
H/F : 062 961 294
Tel : 012 967194 / 012 217 167

Kompong Chhnang office

#167, National Road No.5, Kandal
Village, Kompong Chhnang Commune
H/P : 026 988 712
Fax : 035 988 712
Tel : 012 785 169 / 078 633 322

Kampot office

05, 1 uksaphea village, Kampong
kondal Commune
H/P : 033 932 658
Tel : 012 971 406 / 012 454 348
: 012 820 988

Kandal office

N° 241, National road No.2, Kroperhha
Village, Prekk Russey Commune, Takhmao
District, In front of Cheng Heng Baker
Tel : 092 985 106 / 017 297 196
: 012 338 424

Kratie office

280Eo Wat Village, Kratie Commune,
Kratie district
H/F : 072 971 515
Tel : 016 343 087/ 012 760 886

Kompong Speu office

National Road No.4, Peanich Kam Village,
Rokar Thom Commune,
Chbar Mon District,
H/P : 025 987265
Tel : 012 948 690 / 012 286 798
: 012 507 090

Koh Kong office

#N° 1, Village 3, Smach Mean Chey
Commune, Khemarak Phumin
Municipality
H/P : 035 936129
Tel : 012 836 061 / 092 813 458

Mondulkiri office

Chray Sen Village, Monorom Commune,
Sen Monorum district
Tel : 097 278 3168 / 012 550 171

Odormeanchey office

House:70, Group 6, Chhouk Village,
Samrong Commune, Samrong District
Tel : 012 912 825 / 011 713 324

Prey Veng office

House 282, Group 11, Number 2 Village,
Kampong Leav Commune,
Prey Veng district
H/P : 043 944 528
Fax : 043 944 277
Tel : 097 566 6846 / 092 939 615

Preah Vihear office

House 699, Street 2, Andoung Por Village,
Kampong Pranak Commune, Tbeng Mean
Chey district
Tel : 092 995 902 / 097 470 3548

Pailin office

Group 1, Outapokler Village, Sangkat
Pailin, Khan Pailin, Pailin City
Tel : 067 727 776/ 012 551 547

Pursat office

Bom Beak Iach Road Corner Street 5,
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Ratanakiri office

Phnom Svay Village , Boeng Kanseng
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Tel : 016 711 540

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Fax : 034 933 711
Tel : 016 827 512

Stoeung Treng office

Phum Ler Village, Sras Ruesey Commune,
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H/P : 074 973 853 / Fax: 074 973 277
Tel : 092 767 879

Siem Reap office

#73, Buidling H2, St 6A, Banteay Chash
Village, Slor Kram Commune
H/P : 063 963 402
Tel : 012 944 606 / 017 949 516
: 012 852 723 / 012 483 037

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National Road No.2, Phsartakor Village,
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