



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
**VOICE FORCED TO SHUT DOWN HUMANITARIAN
PROGRAMS IN CAMBODIA**

On Tuesday, November 10th 2009, authorities in Cambodia ordered the humanitarian organization VOICE (Vietnamese Overseas Initiative for Conscience Empowerment) to terminate all operations in Siem Reap, Cambodia. VOICE's expatriate staff and volunteers, dedicated to providing social services to women and children who are victims of the commercial sex industry, were ordered to leave Cambodia within 24 hours or face detention.

The grounds on VOICE's dismissal were that VOICE was operating illegally and creating "illegal troupes" to counter Cambodia's neighboring country by providing vocational training to marginalized trafficked women. "VOICE strongly denies these accusations," says Maxwell Vo, President of VOICE. "This is a devastating setback for the women and children in Cambodia who depend upon the work of VOICE both for the immediate relief to their situation and also for the long term hopes of a brighter future". VOICE Cambodia had a permit to operate in Siem Reap and urges the Cambodian Government to revoke its decision in order to enable VOICE to continue to deliver their social and development programs.

VOICE Cambodia has been in operation since July 2008 with the purpose of providing a number of projects, including vocational training programs to vulnerable women, providing safe and sustainable employment; playgroup/ community center; and partnership in a shelter for under-aged girls who have been rescued from brothels.

About VOICE

VOICE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, independent and politically neutral organization, based in the United States of America. VOICE's humanitarian goals are:

- Winning asylum for the last remaining Vietnamese refugees;
- Countering the trafficking of marginalized women and children; and
- Empowering underprivileged communities.

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November 12, 2009

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