

# *Gov't Asks for Help in Fight Against Drugs*

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The government's anti-drug chief appealed yesterday for regional assistance to stop the flow of chemicals used to make drugs into Cambodia, officials said.

The president of the National Authority for Combating Drugs, Ke Kim Yan, met with Gary Lewis, the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) regional representative for East Asia and the Pacific in Phnom Penh yesterday.

"Recently, anti-drug police seized [nearly] 20 tons of chemical substances, so his Excellency raised this problem faced by the region during the meeting with the U.N. anti-drugs representative, Gary Lewis," Mr. Kim Yan's assistant, Lay Kimly, said.

Mr. Kim Yan said Cambodia needed help from its neighbors to stop substances from entering the country, according to Mr. Kimly.

Police seized at the Sihanoukville port 18 tons of chemicals, headed for a raided drug lab in Kompong Speu province, earlier this month. The shipment, as well as a container shipped to Phnom Penh containing drug-producing equipment, had come from China via ports in Vietnam and Singapore, according to police.

Raids across Phnom Penh in May also led to the seizure of chemicals used to make methamphetamine, as well as 4,000 liters of a Cambodian-produced precursor of the drug ecstasy.

Olivier Lernet, Cambodia country manager for UNODC, confirmed that Mr. Kim Yan "highlight[ed] tackling chemical precursors."

"There is a need for close monitoring of how these are imported," Mr. Lernet agreed.

Mr. Kimly said that the meeting at the Office of the Council of Ministers lasted two hours yesterday.

As well as the transnational shipments of chemicals, the parties discussed community-based treatment for drug addicts and reform of drug laws, Mr. Kimly said.

Mr. Lernet said that Mr. Kim Yan told the U.N. representatives that Cambodia wished to further expand community-based treatment for drug addicts, but that this was a challenge with the country's limited resources.

At present, drug addicts in Cambodia are often sent to controversial treatment centers, where it has been alleged that their human rights are frequently abused.