



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Cambodia

Cambodia – KHM39691 – Female rape
victims – Unmarried non-virgins –

13 January 2012

- 1. Please provide any updated material available to that contained in Country Advice KHM38715 of 20 May 2011 on the position of women who have been raped or suspected of sexual activity prior to marriage.**

The information provided in Country Advice KHM38715 of 20 May 2011 relating to the status of unmarried non-virgins in Cambodia remains current. More recent material supports the evidence provided in the advice that Cambodian women who have been raped or suspected of sexual activity prior to marriage are shamed and discriminated against.

In June 2011, *The Star* reported that “Cambodia remains highly conservative when it comes to issues such as women’s virginity and rape”.¹ *The Huffington Post* similarly recently stated that in Cambodia, “at the moment a girl loses her virginity, she completely loses her allure and value”. The article quotes sex trafficking survivor Somaly Mam, who states that girls forced to work in brothels are considered to be ‘bad luck’ and are unable to get married.²

The *Phnom Penh Post* also reports that Cambodian society “considers women’s virginity before marriage as a thing of high value”, and “Cambodian tradition places importance on being a virgin for single women”. Rape victims, therefore, are often shamed, discriminated against, and may face limited marriage prospects. The value placed on an unmarried woman’s virginity also prevents many rape victims from filing complaints against their perpetrators. If a victim presses charges, the perpetrator may condemn the victim’s family, causing them to gain a bad reputation and lose honour in the community.³

- 2. Deleted.**

¹ „Search for justice by the women who were forced to marry strangers’ 2011, *The Star*, 28 June

² Goldberg, E. 2011, „Somaly Mam, Sex Trafficking Survivor, Fights Slavery And HIV/AIDS In Cambodia’, *The Huffington Post*, 30 November http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/30/somaly-mam-sex-trafficking-slavery-hiv-aids-cambodia_n_1119460.html – Accessed 11 January 2012

³ Samath, K. and Koam, T. 2011, „Why rape happens’, *Phnom Penh Post*, 18 May

References

„Search for justice by the women who were forced to marry strangers’ 2011, *The Star*, 28 June. (FACTIVA)

Goldberg, E. 2011, „Somaly Mam, Sex Trafficking Survivor, Fights Slavery And HIV/AIDS In Cambodia’, *The Huffington Post*, 30 November
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