

Pirate Bay co-founder arrested in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA: A co-founder of top Swedish file sharing site The Pirate Bay, who is on an international wanted list, has been arrested in the Cambodian capital at Stockholm's request, police said on Sunday.

Gottfrid Svartholm Warg was handed a one-year prison sentence by a Swedish court in 2009 for promoting copyright infringement but failed to show up to serve his term at the start of this year. He was detained in Phnom Penh on Thursday, Cambodia's national police spokesman said.

"His arrest was made at the request of the Swedish government for a crime related to information technology," Kirth Chantharith told AFP.

"We don't have an extradition treaty with Sweden but we'll look into our laws and see how we can handle this case," he said, adding that Cambodia was awaiting more information and documents from the Swedish authorities.

The Swedish embassy in Phnom Penh was not immediately available for comment.

Founded in 2003, The Pirate Bay, which claims to have more than 31 million users, makes it possible to skirt copyright fees and share music, film and computer game files using bit torrent technology, or peer-to-peer links offered on the site.

Warg's fellow co-founders of the popular site, Fredrik Neij and Peter Sunde, as well as key financier Carl Lundstroem all had their 12-month sentences reduced to between four and 10 months on appeal in late 2010.

They were also ordered to pay a total of Kr46m (kronor) (US\$6.9m) in damages for copyright infringement to the music and movie industry.

However, Warg did not attend his appeal hearing and his sentence was upheld, followed by an international warrant for his arrest.

During their trial, the defendants maintained that file-sharing services can be used both legally and illegally, and insisted their activities were within the law.

News that Warg had been picked up by police at his riverside apartment on the capital's main tourist strip spread like wildfire among Phnom Penh's expat community over the weekend and was eagerly discussed on online forums.

On Khmer440.com, the main website for foreigners living in Cambodia, editor Peter Hogan described Warg as "a seldom-sighted and reclusive figure" whose presence in the country had long been an "open secret".

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge

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