

Cambodian government such that important equality rights provisions eventually made it into the new Cambodian constitution.<sup>7</sup>

Though UNTAC was considered a success in many respects, there are also some discussions of problems associated with the mission. For example, the UN failed to achieve a situation of political neutrality, as pledged in the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement, in part because the Khmer Rouge withdrew from the demobilization and cantonment process and threatened throughout the mission to disrupt the election campaign.<sup>8</sup> This problem was widely attributed to poor planning in advance of the mission and, in particular, the delayed deployment of the UNTAC mission.<sup>9</sup>

Likewise, the presence of UNTAC may have diminished, but did not stop, political violence, which was aimed at both political party members and ethnic Vietnamese. The massacres and exodus of ethnic Vietnamese, many of whom were second- and third-generation Cambodians, were not sufficiently addressed by the UN according to critics. As Grant Curtis points out, 'no party, including UNTAC, made efforts to protect the rights of Cambodia's ethnic Vietnamese population.'<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the extent of the UNTAC response was to organize the 'Safe Passage' operation, which as Raoul Jennar writes, effectively legitimized the forced departure of the Vietnamese.<sup>11</sup>

These are obviously very serious concerns, but there are also another series of issues which emerged throughout the UNTAC mission, and which are seldom discussed in UN documents or mainstream accounts of the mission.<sup>12</sup> Though credited with helping to create the emergence of a fledgling women's movement as well as a number of women's NGOs, there were also a number of important negative consequences for women within Cambodia as a result of the UNTAC mission. These include the reported exponential increase in prostitution to serve UNTAC personnel, with the Cambodian Women's Development Association estimating that the number of prostitutes in Cambodia grew from about 6,000 in 1992 to more than 25,000 at the height of the mission.<sup>13</sup> Some reports indicated that the majority of prostitutes were young Vietnamese women, though these estimates are more likely a result of anti-Vietnamese sentiment as any reflection of reality.<sup>14</sup>

While the presence of prostitutes was not new, and by many accounts frequenting prostitutes is a regular feature of many Cambodian men's behaviour, Cambodians were nonetheless alarmed by the dramatic increase in prostitution and noted that prior to UNTAC it was quite hidden in Cambodian society but became something which

was very prevalent and open.<sup>15</sup> The rise of child prostitution has also been linked in some NGO reports to the arrival of UNTAC.<sup>16</sup> The widespread use of prostitutes was raised by the Khmer Rouge as part of their efforts to undermine the peace process when they accused peacekeepers of being too busy with prostitutes to check on the presence of Vietnamese soldiers.<sup>17</sup> As Judy Ledgerwood wrote: 'Some Cambodians were more inclined to believe Khmer Rouge propaganda that UNTAC was collaborating with the Vietnamese to colonize Cambodia when they saw UNTAC personnel taking Vietnamese "wives".'<sup>18</sup>

The influx of nearly 23,000 UN personnel and the dramatic rise in prostitution also appears to have resulted in a dramatic rise in cases of HIV and AIDS, with the WHO reporting that 75 per cent of people giving blood in Phnom Penh were infected with HIV (though this is considered inflated by some observers) and another report indicating that 20 per cent of soldiers in one French battalion tested positive when they finished their six-month tour of duty.<sup>19</sup> UNTAC's chief medical officer predicted that as many as six times more UN personnel would eventually die of AIDS contracted in Cambodia than had died as a result of hostile action.<sup>20</sup>

As criticism toward UN personnel within Cambodia grew, a number of what Judy Ledgerwood describes as 'telling' actions were announced. Peacekeepers were warned to be more discreet, for example by not parking their distinctive white vehicles outside massage parlours and in red light areas and by not frequenting brothels in uniform.<sup>21</sup> A second response was to ship an additional 800,000 condoms to Cambodia.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to prostitution, charges emerged also of sexual abuse and violence. Raoul Jennar reported that in 1993, 'in the Preah Vihear hospital, there was for a time a majority of injured people who were young kids, the victims of sexual abuse by UN soldiers.'<sup>23</sup> A number of interviewees reported that there were frequent claims of rape and sexual assault brought to women's NGOs during the UNTAC period, but often many days or weeks after the rapes were alleged to have taken place, such that the usual expectations surrounding evidence collection could not be carried out and therefore claims could not be substantiated to the satisfaction of UN officials.<sup>24</sup>

It is also a widely shared view among many Cambodian women and men that the phenomenon of 'fake marriages' was widespread during the UNTAC period. Simply put, a UN soldier would marry a