

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Cambodia: Open Letter in support of the residents living around Boeung Kak Lake

To His Excellency Kep Chuktema, Governor of the Municipality of Phnom Penh:

We are writing to you about the situation of up to 1,500 families, or as many as 10,000 people, who are still living around Boeung Kak Lake. They have been faced with uncertainty and the threat of forced eviction from their homes since the company which was granted a 99 year lease for development of the land began filling the lake with sand in August 2008. Around 2,000 families have already been forcibly evicted since then without proper consultation. Moreover, they have either not received adequate compensation, or have been relocated to a resettlement site lacking basic services and work opportunities.

Amnesty International was deeply concerned when the Municipality of Phnom Penh issued an eviction notice to the remaining families around Boeung Kak Lake on 2 March 2011. Over 37,600 of our supporters around the world signed petitions that were sent to His Excellency Sar Kheng. Thousands of Amnesty members have written individual messages and letters to your office. These called for a halt on evictions and for a meaningful consultation with the affected families, including about alternative proposals for development of on-site housing.

We understand that there has been a meeting between the community and the Municipality, and that the Boeung Kak Lake families have presented a further proposal regarding on-site development since their alternative plan was not accepted.

As National Directors of 28 Amnesty International offices around the world, we are calling on the Municipality of Phnom Penh to now hold genuine consultations with the affected community; to take all necessary steps to avoid further forced evictions; and to find a solution which addresses all their concerns. There is now an opportunity for the Municipality of Phnom Penh to find a way forward which respects the rights of the affected families, and which will show that Cambodia is genuinely concerned for the long-term welfare of its people, including those living in poverty.

Cambodia is a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and other international human rights treaties which prohibit forced evictions and related human rights violations. The government therefore has an obligation to stop forced evictions and to protect the population from such measures.

We strongly encourage you to show that forced evictions are neither necessary nor acceptable in Cambodia, and to ensure that negotiations with the community will be carried out in good faith to find a durable solution that meets international standards and the needs of the families.

Yours sincerely

Signed on to by National Directors of Amnesty International:

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