

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 23/01/98

UA 19/98

Fear for Safety / Medical concern

20 January 1998

CAMBODIA Ho Chenda (f)

Chen (f)

---

Amnesty International fears for the safety of Ho Chenda and Chen, two female members of the FUNCINPEC party who were arrested on 29 December 1997 in Koh Kong province in southern Cambodia, and have been detained without charge or trial at the provincial military headquarters since that date.

The two women were arrested at the home of a friend by the Deputy Commander of the Provincial Military Forces, who arrived at the house accompanied by armed bodyguards in a pick-up truck with a machine gun mounted on the back. He reportedly asked the two women to come with him "to do some work for a while". The women have been held at the military base ever since, and no one has been allowed to see them since 10 January. One of the women is believed to be suffering from malaria and may require urgent medical assistance.

A friend who was able to visit the two women on 10 January reported that both are very frightened and fear for their safety at the military base, which is not a legal detention facility. Human rights workers have been denied access to the women.

It is believed that the two women were arrested because of their alleged close links with FUNCINPEC members who are currently refugees in Thailand.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Cambodia has had a coalition government since elections organized by the United Nations in 1993. The two main parties in the coalition were FUNCINPEC led by Prince Norodom Ranariddh and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) led by Hun Sen. On 5 July 1997, CPP forces loyal to Hun Sen launched violent attacks in the capital and fighting continued throughout the weekend. By 7 July the capital was in the hands of the CPP troops. In addition to the casualties that occurred during the fighting, more than 40 of Prince Ranariddh's supporters were extrajudicially executed, while hundreds of FUNCINPEC soldiers and officials were detained, some of whom were tortured. Hundreds of FUNCINPEC supporters fled abroad. Elections are scheduled to take place in Cambodia in July 1998. Fighting between Prince Ranariddh's supporters and Hun Sen's troops continues in the northwest of the country, and many people who remain loyal to Prince Ranariddh in the provinces live in fear of intimidation and possible arrest.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or French or your own language:**

- expressing concern that Ho Chenda and Chen have been illegally detained at the Provincial Military Headquarters in Koh Kong province since 29 December 1997;
- expressing fear for their safety at this illegal detention facility, and urging that they be granted immediate access to their families, lawyers, and any medical care they may need;
- stating that their continued detention without charge or trial violates Cambodian law, and urging that they be released immediately.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

HE Hun Sen  
Second Prime Minister  
Office of the Council of Ministers  
Phnom Penh  
Cambodia

**Telegrams: HE Hun Sen, Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

**Faxes: + 855 23 42 6134 / 6144 (if unable to get tone, try later. If voice, ask for fax)**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

HE Tea Banh  
Minister of Defence  
Office of the Council of Ministers  
Phnom Penh  
Cambodia

**Telegrams: HE Tea Banh, Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Cambodia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 March 1998.