

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 143/94 Arbitrary killings / Fear for safety

12 April 1994

CAMBODIA Ethnic Vietnamese villagers in Kandal Province

Amnesty International is gravely concerned by the killing of 13 ethnic Vietnamese civilians, nine of them children, in an attack on Piem So village, in Kandal Province on 9 April 1994. The attack follows a pattern of violence against ethnic Vietnamese Cambodians in 1993 by forces of the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK) or *Khmer Rouge*. Amnesty International fears there will be further killings unless the Government of Cambodia takes action to halt such attacks and to provide protection to its ethnic Vietnamese communities.

On 9 April, five men entered Piem So village, armed with grenades and AK-47 rifles. The men, dressed in civilian clothes, threw grenades at a group of young children playing in the road. They then attacked a woman nearby, and shot dead the village headman. The attackers ran through the village, firing at women and children and throwing grenades. A young mother was killed, and her 23-day-old baby lost an arm. As they left the village, the attackers set parts of it ablaze.

While the Cambodian government has condemned the attack at Piem So village as "cruel terrorism", Amnesty International fears for the safety of ethnic Vietnamese communities in Cambodia. The new Cambodian Constitution affords human rights guarantees only to people of Khmer (Cambodian) origin, thus excluding the ethnic Vietnamese minority.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Piem So village is a long-established ethnic Vietnamese community whose residents were forced to leave Cambodia during the years of *Khmer Rouge* rule in the 1970s. When the *Khmer Rouge* were ousted from power by a Vietnamese-led invasion in late 1978, many former residents returned to their homes in Piem So.

In May 1993, following the signing of the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements, 90 per cent of Cambodia's electorate voted in a UN-supervised multi-party election, and a new government was formed. During the 2 year stay of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) from November 1991 to September 1993, over 140 ethnic Vietnamese civilians were killed. The *Partie of Democratic Kampuchea* (PDK) or *Khmer Rouge*, which signed the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements failed to comply with their terms and withdrew from the peace process.

Attacks on ethnic Vietnamese communities by NADK forces increased and over 25,000 civilians fled to Viet Nam. Some 5,000 are still stranded at the Cambodian border with Viet Nam. The attack on Piem So village follows a pattern set by NADK forces in 1993; and while the five assailants were reportedly dressed in civilian clothing, it is certain that the attack of 9 April was both carefully planned, and ethnically motivated, as previous attacks by the NADK have been.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes and airmail letters either in French, English or in your own language:

- expressing concern about the killings of 9 April 1994 in Piem So village, which tragically demonstrate that ethnic Vietnamese civilians in Cambodia, including women and children, remain extremely vulnerable to attack;

- calling on the Royal Government of Cambodia to investigate the killings promptly and fairly, and to bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the Royal Government of Cambodia to provide immediate and adequate protection to the ethnic Vietnamese minority in Cambodia;
- urging that the ethnic Vietnamese are provided with guarantees of their full rights and freedoms under the law, in line with the rest of the population.

APPEALS TO

1). His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk
 Head of State
 The Royal Palace
 Phnom Penh
 Cambodia

Telegrams: HM King Norodom Sihanouk, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Faxes: + 855 232 6110

Salutation: Your Majesty

2). Samdech Krompreah Norodom Ranariddh
 First Prime Minister
 Office of the Council of Ministers
 Phnom Penh
 Cambodia

Telegrams: HRH Norodom Ranariddh, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Faxes: + 855 232 6144 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Your Royal Highness

3). His Excellency Hun Sen
 Second Prime Minister
 Office of the Council of Ministers
 Phnom Penh
 Cambodia

Telegrams: HE Hun Sen, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Faxes: + 855 232 6144 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Please note that it may be necessary to go through the international operator in order to send a fax to Cambodia.

Cambodia has almost no diplomatic representation in other countries.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 24 May 1994.