

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 23/07/96

UA 125/96 Fear for safety / Possible extrajudicial execution 21 May 1996

CAMBODIA Political activists from the Khmer Nation Party

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Thun Bun Ly, newspaper editor

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Amnesty International fears for the safety of political party activists in Phnom Penh, following the possible extrajudicial execution of Thun Bun Ly, a newspaper editor and party worker with *Cheat Khmae* (Khmer Nation Party or KNP) on 18 May 1996.

Thun Bun Ly was shot dead in broad daylight near his house on 18 May, by two men on a motorcycle, who hit him three times from the rear with shots from a K-59 pistol. He died on the street, and police later came to the Buddhist temple where his body was lying, and removed the bullets from his body.

Amnesty International fears for the safety of other KNP activists, particularly some individuals who are also involved in journalism, when they attend the funeral of Thun Bun Ly, scheduled for 8am on 22 May in Phnom Penh. The organization has received information that several individuals who have received death threats in the recent past, because of their peaceful political activities are at risk should they attend Thun Bun Ly's funeral.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 1994, two journalists who had published articles critical of the Royal Cambodian Government were shot dead in unexplained attacks. In February 1996, Ek Mongkul, a popular radio personality was shot and wounded from behind by men travelling on a motorcycle. No one has ever been brought to justice for these attacks. The bullets that killed Nuon Chan were also removed from his body by the police. Other journalists working with opposition newspapers have received death threats in the recent past. Amnesty International has noted a clear pattern of increasing restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression and association in Cambodia, as the Royal Government is becoming less and less tolerant of public criticism.

The KNP was established in November 1995 by prominent government critic Sam Rainsy. To date, the Ministry of Interior has refused to register the party as a legal entity, and the KNP has been ordered to close its offices in Phnom Penh. It has defied the order and continues to recruit membership throughout the country. Sam Rainsy and his family have received death threats in the last 18 months, and have been the subject of appeals by Amnesty International.

Thun Bun Ly was followed home from Sam Rainsy's house on the morning of 18 May; he was shot and killed half an hour later.

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

**if you are able to send telegram or faxed appeals before 1.00am GMT, 22 May:**

- ask for assurances that KNP activists be able to attend the funeral of their colleague Thun Bun Ly, without fear of attack;

**otherwise send appeals:**

- expressing concern that journalists and political party activists are being threatened, apparently for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly;

- calling on the Royal Government to uphold the rights of all people in Cambodia, including those engaged in journalism and peaceful political opposition;

- expressing concern at the violent death of Thun Bun Ly, and urging the Royal Government to establish an immediate investigation into his death, that the results of the investigation be made public, and those found responsible be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

Samdech Krompreah Norodom Ranariddh  
First Prime Minister  
Office of the Council of Ministers  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

**Faxes: +855 234 26054 or 234 26127**

**Telegrams: HRH Norodom Ranariddh, Phnom penh, Cambodia**

**Salutation: Your Royal Highness**

His Excellency Hun Sen  
Second Prime Minister  
Office of the Council of Ministers,  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

**Faxes: +855 234 26106**

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

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency Sar Kheng  
Minister of Interior  
Office of the Council of Ministers  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

**Faxes: + 855 234 26106**

**Telegrams: Interior Minister, 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 20 July 1996.