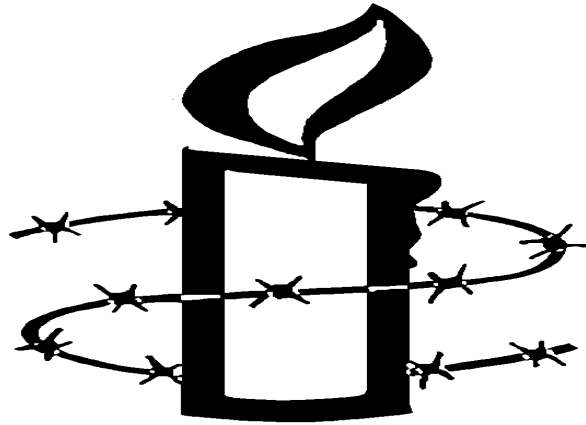

amnesty international

CAMBODIA

CONCERNS AND RECOMMENDATIONS, ASIA-EUROPE MEETING, 3-4 April 1998, London

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AI Index: ASA 23/07/98
Distr: External

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, 1 EASTON STREET, LONDON WC1X 8DJ, UNITED KINGDOM



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In the aftermath of an effective coup in early July 1997, dozens of First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh's associates were extrajudicially executed, and hundreds more were detained, some of whom were tortured. Hundreds of people fled to neighbouring countries in fear of their lives, including National Assembly members and FUNCINPEC government officials. Some have since returned, but others remain in exile, including Prince Ranariddh himself. If he returns to Cambodia, he faces arrest and detention, because a military court issued a warrant for his arrest, on a number of apparently politically motivated criminal charges. The court system in Cambodia is neither fair nor independent, and in political cases, verdicts appear to be decided upon in advance. The government has made many commitments to investigate the killings and other human rights violations associated with the coup, including to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, but it has actually done little more than attempt to discredit the work of organizations involved in human rights monitoring, including the UN Centre for Human Rights and Amnesty International. Elections are scheduled for July 1998 and further violence cannot be ruled out. Impunity for human rights violators is institutionalised, and lies at the heart of many of Cambodia's human rights problems.

The European Union (EU) has a key role to play as many EU states are party to the Paris Peace Accords of 1991 which settled the earlier Cambodian conflict and provide, *inter alia*, strong guarantees for human rights. The EU is involved in the Asia Europe Meeting and the ASEAN Regional Forum. The European Union has also agreed, in January 1998, to provide more than US\$10 million to fund the forthcoming elections in Cambodia. The EU has therefore several opportunities to exert influence, either individually or in concert, on the human rights situation.

ASEAN has attempted to mediate in the conflict in Cambodia, and has delayed Cambodia's entry into the organization, which was due to take place at the end of July last year. Discussions on Cambodia between the EU and its partners in ASEM will likely focus on the regional security context : human rights are integral to security and therefore human rights protection and respect must be at the heart of any durable solution to the current crisis.

Amnesty International calls on the Member States of the European Union in their meetings with counterparts in Asia, either individually or in concert, and as part of the ASEM process:

- to welcome the efforts of ASEAN to promote a return to the rule of law in Cambodia, which is vital in this pre-electoral period.
- to ensure that human rights guarantees form a cornerstone in any solution to the current crisis in Cambodia, including the holding of free and fair elections.
- to raise the human rights situation in Cambodia as part of the political dialogue process with other members of the Asia Europe Meeting.
- to urge that all pressure be maintained upon the Cambodian authorities to account for the dozens of people believed to have been extrajudicially executed after 5-6 July.
- to urge that legal measures in Cambodia which provide for impunity for civil servants are speedily repealed, and individuals who are state employees - including members of the police and armed forces - who are suspected of having committed human rights violations are brought to justice.
- to ask for guarantees from the Cambodian Government that the fundamental rights to freedom of association, expression and assembly will be upheld, especially in this pre-electoral period.