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Public Statement

Cambodia

First anniversary of grenade attack – victims should not be forgotten

On the day when media attention is focused on the return to Cambodia of Prince Norodom Ranariddh, ousted from power in the 1997 July coup, Amnesty International remembers all the victims of political violence in the last year – especially those killed and wounded exactly a year ago today.

At least 16 people were killed and more than 100 injured when four grenades were thrown at a peaceful, authorised demonstration outside the National Assembly building in Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh. The demonstrators were all supporters of the opposition Khmer Nation Party, whose leader Sam Rainsy appeared to be the target of the attack. He escaped without injury, but many others did not. A year later victims are still recovering from their injuries, and their suffering is compounded by the fact that no one has ever been brought to justice for the attack.

Institutionalized impunity for human rights violators in Cambodia causes additional distress to victims and their families. People who are implicated in involvement in serious human rights violations, including political killings, are never brought before a court. Sadly, scores of people have been unlawfully killed in Cambodia since the grenade attack on 30 March 1997.

Amnesty International hopes that today people will remember the victims of the 30 March grenade attack, and all other victims of political violence in Cambodia, and will join the organization in its ongoing call to the Cambodian authorities for justice and accountability.
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