

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 309/02 (ASA 39/007/2002, 17 October 2002) and follow-ups (ASA 39/008/2002, 29 November 2002; ASA 39/012/2003, 17 November 2003) - Fear of forcible return/ Prisoner of Conscience/ Health Concern

THAILAND Sok Yoeun (m), aged over 50

Amnesty International (AI) has received information from the Thai Foreign Ministry that prisoner of conscience Sok Yoeun will soon be released and allowed to rejoin his family in Finland.

The research team at the International Secretariat has said, "We are delighted that Sok Yoeun will soon leave prison where he has spent over four years and urge all those concerned to ensure his speedy release and reunion with his wife and children...Four years in prison being used as a political pawn is a tragedy for him and his family and our elation is tempered by regret over the fact that he has been in prison at all".

Sok Yoeun lost a final appeal in the Thai courts against extradition to Cambodia in November 2003, provoking an international outcry. The Cambodian authorities dropped the extradition request on 15 January leading to this welcome decision.

His release is a result of tireless global campaigning. In November 2003, Sok Yoeun featured in a postcard campaign organized by AI Thailand, which was taken up by different sections all over the world. AI Finland also organized a campaign on his behalf. He has featured in AI seasonal greeting cards campaign during his imprisonment. Recently he has received 2700 letters from supporters around the world. Sok Yoeun is extremely grateful to all those who campaigned on his behalf and is trying to ensure that he leaves prison with all of his letters.

Many thanks to all those who sent appeals. No further action from the UA network is requested.