

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 23/02/97

UA 65/97

Fear for safety

11 March 1997

**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA** Srun Vong Vannak

---

Srun Vong Vannak, chief of security of the opposition Khmer Nation Party (KNP), is being held in incommunicado detention at an unknown location. Amnesty International fears for his safety.

Srun Vong Vannak was arrested on 14 February 1997, after leaving the KNP office in the capital Phnom Penh at 10am. Since that time his family has not been able to find him and attempts by lawyers and human rights workers to gain access to him at the usual detention facilities in Phnom Penh have been prevented by the authorities.

On 3 March, journalists who had gathered at the Phnom Penh Court to cover a particular court case, happened to see Srun Vong Vannak, surrounded by a group of police officers. It is believed that he had been brought to court that day for an initial hearing. However, no one has seen him since.

According to the information available, Srun Vong Vannak was arrested on suspicion of involvement in the murder of Kov Samuth, the brother-in-law of Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, in November 1996. A document apparently from the Phnom Penh Municipal Police states that after his arrest, Srun Vong Vannak initially confessed to involvement in the killing, but later withdrew the confession.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Although officially still unrecognised, the KNP is the main opposition party in Cambodia. There are serious political tensions in the country at the present time, with very poor relations between government and opposition, and also between the two major parties in the coalition government, which have resulted in violence in recent weeks. Relations between the KNP and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), led by second Prime Minister Hun Sen, are particularly poor. Police and security forces in Cambodia tend to have an affiliation to one of the major political parties, and the judicial system is not independent.

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

- requesting information as to the health and whereabouts of Srun Vong Vannak, arrested in Phnom Penh on 14 February 1997;
- calling on the Cambodian authorities to uphold his rights in detention, as guaranteed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Cambodia is a party;
- in particular, calling for Srun Vong Vannak to be given access to his family and a lawyer of his choice.

**APPEALS TO:**

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

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

**Faxes: + 855 234 26054**

**Salutation: Your Royal Highness**

His Excellency Hun Sen  
Second Prime Minister  
Office of the Council of Ministers  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
**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  
**Telegrams: HE Sar Kheng, Phnom Penh, Cambodia**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Chem Snguon  
Minister of Justice  
Office of the Council of Ministers  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
**Telegrams: Chem Snguon, Phnom Penh, Cambodia**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**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 28 April 1997.