

UA 245/98

Fear of torture/ Fear for safety/
Fear of "disappearance"

15 September 1998

CAMBODIA Dozens of people arrested in Phnom Penh in the last ten days, including:
Bun Ly, Meas Piseth, Luor Hak, Sim Den, Cham Sarin, Eng Seng Hean, Set Ny,
Chhuon Saroeung, Keo Sambath, Kim Sovan, Soy Kim, Chay Sok
Thay, Sek Thea, Chhom Chea, Bun Tha, Sun Mao, Chhim Hay,
Kim Lay, Lon Chhay, Nuo Phong

Amnesty International fears for the safety of dozens of people who have been arrested in Phnom Penh in the last ten days, after the security forces violently dispersed a sit-down demonstration in front of the National Assembly on 8 September 1998. Opposition activities have continued, which the authorities have tried to crush.

The Cambodian authorities have acknowledged only 22 arrests, although Amnesty International has received reports of many more. At least 20 people have been taken to the Tuol Kork District Police Station. It is not known where others have been detained.

Amnesty International fears for the safety of those in detention, and believes they are at risk of torture, ill-treatment and possible "disappearance". Detainees in Cambodia are frequently subjected to beatings in police custody, during the first 48 hours of detention.

Amnesty International also fears that some of those arrested may be in urgent need of medical attention, as the security forces broke up the opposition protests with excessive force, beating demonstrators with batons, and firing live ammunition.

Amnesty International is investigating reports of up to 14 deaths in the last ten days, which may have been connected with the break up of the protests. The organization fears that some of those arrested may have been killed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The political situation in Cambodia has become increasingly tense and violent in the last fortnight. Opposition politicians and their supporters have been engaged in protests against alleged electoral fraud following the 26 July 1998 general elections, in which the ruling Cambodian People's Party was declared the winner. The protests have been peaceful, although the rhetoric of some politicians was virulently anti-Vietnamese; four ethnic Vietnamese in Phnom Penh were killed by angry mobs, several days before the security forces broke up the protests.

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

- calling on the authorities to ensure that all those in detention in connection with the violent dispersal of the opposition protests are not subjected to torture, ill-treatment or "disappearance";
- urging that all those in detention are given immediate access to lawyers, their families and medical attention as required;
- asking that a complete list of all those detained, their places of detention and any charges against them be made public;
- urging that all those detained solely for their peaceful participation in the opposition protest movement be immediately and unconditionally released.

APPEALS TO:

Samdech Hun Sen
Second Prime Minister
Office of the Council of Ministers
Phnom Penh
Cambodia

Faxes: + 855 23 42 6134 (if voice, ask for fax)

Telegrams: HE Hun Sen, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Salutation: Your Excellency

HE Sar Kheng
Minister of Interior
Office of the Council of Ministers
Phnom Penh
Cambodia

Faxes: +855 23 42 6144 (if voice, ask for fax)

Telegrams: HE Sar Kheng, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

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 27 October 1998.

**"No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment
or punishment".**

Article 5, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights