

Cambodia: Time for truth about political killings

The Cambodian authorities must reveal the truth about the reported execution of political opponents, Amnesty International said today as it released details deliberate killings since the coup of 5 July.

“The Cambodian authorities have been offering the world assurances about human rights, while at the same time withholding information about those detained, missing and even killed,” the human rights organization said.

“Second Prime Minister Hun Sen has asked human rights organizations to raise human rights abuses with him personally. Here is the evidence of targeted killings and mass round-ups of his political opponents. The time for accountability has come.”

In the report, *Kingdom of Cambodia: Arrest and Execution of Political Opponents*, Amnesty International gives details of the deliberate killings of more than 30 royalist and other political activists, along with the arrest of hundreds more.

In at least one case, the mutilated bodies of victims were left on a public highway for two days, apparently as a warning to the local population. Four other men, reported to be bodyguards of FUNCINPEC minister Chao Sambath, appear to have been executed while tied and gagged and their bodies dumped at a temple in Phnom Penh.

“The Cambodian authorities must show good faith by providing details of those opponents currently being held, and access to them by human rights monitors,” Amnesty International said. “Until their situation is known, we hold grave fears for their safety.”

The organization is also concerned at reports of FUNCINPEC members in provincial areas being arrested, charged, tried and convicted of a number of offences in a matter of days after the events of 5-6 July.

“This appears to be a blatant abuse of the judicial system for political ends,” Amnesty International said. “It could be used later to exclude people from standing as candidates in future elections.”

Amnesty International urged ASEAN and other governments to continue working for the protection of human rights in Cambodia.

“Over the past week, Cambodia has hovered again on the brink of tragedy. It is vital that all governments act now to halt the cycle of violence and human rights abuse,” the organization said.
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