

# £CAMBODIA

## @New allegations of extrajudicial killings by the Partie of Democratic Kampuchea ("Khmer Rouge")

In mid-December 1990, Amnesty International obtained information alleging that security forces of the Partie of Democratic Kampuchea (the "Khmer Rouge") had executed some 30 members of its armed forces on 27 July 1990 because they were suspected of being the "ringleaders" of a movement within its ranks demanding greater personal and economic freedom.

The Partie of Democratic Kampuchea is one of three Cambodian political groups comprising the National Government of Cambodia, formerly known as the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. The other two are the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC) and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front. Since 1989 the three groups have intensified armed and other activities opposed to the State of Cambodia, formerly the People's Republic of Kampuchea. The State of Cambodia administers most of the country's population and territory from the capital in Phnom Penh, but has little international recognition. However, the components of the National Government of Cambodia now exert political authority over several parts of Cambodian territory, including some population centres. Meanwhile, leading figures from the State of Cambodia and the National Government of Cambodia have formed a Supreme National Council, which they have agreed is the repository of Cambodian sovereignty. This is part of an internationally-sponsored effort to end more than two decades of international and domestic conflict involving the country.

Amnesty International addresses governments on its human rights concerns because they are responsible under international law for protecting human rights. In certain circumstances, it also addresses itself to other political structures, where they have characteristics of political authority that in practice put them in a position where they may be expected to respect international human rights standards. Doing so does not imply that Amnesty International takes any position on the legitimacy of rival governments or political structures.

Amnesty International expressed its concern about the alleged killings by the Partie of Democratic Kampuchea in letters addressed on 18 December 1990 to its President and Vice President, Khieu Samphan and Son Sen, to National Government of Cambodia Prime Minister Son Sann, and to Prince Norodom Ranariddh of the FUNCINPEC. On 1

February 1991, Prime Minister Son Sann responded to the letter addressed to him, enclosing a copy of a letter he had written the previous day to Vice President Khieu Samphan. In his letter Son Sann expressed his concern to the Partie of Democratic Kampuchea leader about "the accusations of human rights violations of which your partie is constantly accused", and about its failure ever to "provide any evidence to the contrary or at least provide public clarifications" about alleged abuses. However, to date, Amnesty International has received no response from the leaders of the Partie of Democratic Kampuchea itself, and it is now making details of the allegations public.

According to the information obtained by Amnesty International, the 30 members of the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK) allegedly killed were summarily executed by Partie of Democratic Kampuchea forces in Zone 1003 on 27 July 1990. Those allegedly killed were apparently accused of being dissidents within the NADK. Some 70 others suspected of being followers of those allegedly killed are said to have been detained and to have been severely ill-treated during interrogation by NADK military police.

The alleged executions reportedly took place after NADK military police accused the victims of being the "ringleaders" of a movement demanding the implementation of stated Partie of Democratic Kampuchea policies promising greater personal and economic freedom. Those allegedly killed were reportedly taken earlier in July from the newly established Division 616 base camp in the prey s'ak forests which cover outlying parts of Siem Reap-Utdar Meanchey and Preah Vihear provinces to the headquarters of Zone 1003. They were reportedly kept there for approximately one week. Six of them, including a chairman of a company of Division 616 special forces named Buntheuan, were then reportedly shot dead in their beds before dawn on the morning of 27 July. Shortly thereafter the others - 24 in all - were taken into a nearby forest, where it is feared they were also executed.

According to the reports, the victims were accused of having instigated several episodes of unrest since 1987 among troops and non-combatant residents at the former Division 616 base camp known as Choam Sla, at the nearby Partie of Democratic Kampuchea camp known as K7 and at the headquarters of Zone 1003 itself, as well as among villagers in Rovieng district of Preah Vihear province. The unrest reportedly related to dissatisfaction over continuing restrictions on the means of livelihood, freedom of movement, contact with foreigners and practice of the Buddhist religion of those involved, who sought greater freedoms, in accordance with the Partie of Democratic Kampuchea's statements in favour of the establishment of a liberal system in Cambodia. Some of the 70 reportedly detained by NADK military police are said to have been held in underground cells at a prison in Choam Sla where they were repeatedly and severely beaten by military police interrogators to try to compel them to "confess" who the "ringleaders" of the unrest were. Those reportedly killed were apparently named in the

"confessions" extracted. It is not clear whether the 70 are still being held. They were reportedly transferred to a newly constructed detention centre in a prey s'ak forest area, but it appears that some or all of them may now have been released.

Amnesty International stated in its letters of 18 December 1990 that it considered that these allegations warranted an urgent independent and impartial investigation, the findings of which should be made public at an early date. It urged that if the allegations were found to have substance, the National Government of Cambodia should make known what steps it was taking to ensure that those responsible for grave violations of human rights are brought to justice and that full safeguards are introduced to prevent further human rights violations by the political structures that comprise it.