

232/95

AI INDEX: ASA 23/17/95

27 NOVEMBER 1995

KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA: RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL MUST BE UPHELD

In a statement released today in Phnom Penh, Amnesty International expresses concern about the case of political prisoner Prince Norodom Sirivuddh, who has been detained in the Ministry of Interior since 21 November 1995.

"Amnesty International believes that Prince Sirivuddh is a political prisoner", the organization said. "His right to a fair trial, in accordance with international standards, must be upheld."

Prince Norodom Sirivuddh, an elected member of Cambodia's National Assembly and the Secretary-General of FUNCINPEC, one of the two political parties in Cambodia's Royal Government, was placed under house arrest on 19 November following allegations that he was involved in a plot to assassinate the Second Prime Minister Hun Sen. It appears that the procedures leading up to his arrest and detention may have contravened Cambodian and international law.

Initial charges cited at the time of the arrest included organizing a group of armed forces, attempting to overthrow the Royal Government and committing an act of terrorism, all of which carry long prison sentences.

Following a preliminary investigation into the case based on the evidence reportedly advanced against him, Amnesty International is concerned that the serious charges laid against Prince Sirivuddh may be politically motivated.

"It is essential that Prince Sirivuddh be given immediate access to legal counsel of his own choice, in order to prepare his defence against the charges he faces," Amnesty International said.

"Prince Sirivuddh and his legal counsel should be provided with details about those charges, and given access to all official documentation relevant to the case. "

Failure to allow Prince Sirivuddh to consult properly and in full confidence with legal counsel of his choice, and to provide access to related documentation would constitute a violation of his right under international law to a fair trial.

An Amnesty International delegation currently visiting Cambodia today welcomed the recent statement by Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, calling on the courts to give Prince Sirivuddh a fair trial.

"Cambodia is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It has a duty to ensure that the rights of all people in detention, including the right to a fair trial are respected," Amnesty International said.

ENDS\