



STATEMENT

by

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Samdech Preah Upayuvareach NORODOM SIHANOUK of Cambodia

Chairman of the Khmer Institute of Democracy

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I was found guilty by a Cambodian “Court” yesterday of defaming the Cambodian Prime Minister, Hun Sen, for suggesting that the Cambodian leader used violence to silence his critics. I reject the verdict as it comes from a “Court” that is non-independent and totally controlled by the Cambodian People’s Party, the ruling party of Cambodian politics.

I do not intend to pay the fine of 18 million riel (US\$ 4,338) to the Cambodian Prime Minister, because I do not believe that the “Court” case was a fair one. Even if I had the money, I would not pay the fine, as to do so would be to recognize the mockery of justice, the corruption and lack of impartiality of the legal system that exists in that Southeast Asian country.

I maintain my assertion that the Prime Minister is a violent ruler. I base my argument in the following cases:

- 1) The grenade attack against a peaceful demonstration of the Sam Rainsy Party on 30 March 1997, in which 16 people lost their lives and over 150 were wounded, including a US citizen. According to a report

by the FBI, shown to Mr. Sid Balman , Diplomatic writer of UPI, who wired on 21 August 1997, that the “Clinton administration has concluded that Cambodian strongman Hun Sen was complicit in a bloody grenade attack on a rally of political opponents during March, and that the government he installed following a coup in July obtains much of its financing from narcotics traffickers”;

- 2) Mr. Ho Sok, the late Secretary of State of the Ministry of Interior, whom was executed in July 1997 within the premises of the Ministry of Interior, after he had been warned by the Prime Minister “to wear a helmet” if Ho Sok proceeded with his investigation of marijuana trafficking by a close associate of the PM. Until today there has never been any report of the investigation ordered by Mr. Sar Kheng, Minister of the Interior and announced to the US Ambassador to Cambodia on 23 July 1997;
- 3) The extra judicial execution of several senior Cambodian Army officers of the FUNCINPEC Party during the coup of July 1997 by forces under the command of Hun Sen. These executions have been amply documented by the UN and other International organizations but the Cambodian government has never provided a proper explanation for them.
- 4) The killing of my friend Om Rassady, the killing of Chea Vichea and the killings of many other Cambodian journalists for denouncing the corruption of the Phnom Penh regime. Their murders have never been explained.

Until such time as when the Cambodian government and Prime Minister Hun Sen have provided proper explanations for the above-mentioned executions and killings I shall maintain my assertion that the Prime Minister is a violent ruler.

I call on the Australian Government to cancel the invitation extended to Prime Minister Hun Sen to visit this country. If the Australian Government wishes to be taken seriously about its concern for terrorism, democracy and rule of the law in this region, it should not dishonour itself by receiving officially, at tax payer's expense, a man that is responsible for so much of the suffering and bloodshed in Cambodia in recent years.