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**SAM RAINSY PARTY
PARTI SAM RAINSY**

សីលធម៌ សម្បជធម៌ យុត្តិធម៌

PUBLIC STATEMENT

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A CAMBODIAN ARMY BRIGADE TO FIRE REAL AMMUNITIONS FOR SIX DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION

The Sam Rainsy Party has today lodged a complaint to the NEC, demanding that a training exercise by the Cambodian armed forces in the province of Kompong Speu before the election be either cancelled or postponed until after the election.

In its weird wisdom, the Cambodian armed forces have decided to conduct the training exercise for six days from 20 July, 2003. Three armoured tanks will travel presumably on Highway 4 from Kambol to the shooting range, ACO, where the exercise will take place.

A letter from the Commanding Officer of the Special Parachute Brigade Number 911 to the Army Chief of Staff, dated 7 July, 2003, says they will fire real ammunition for six days until 25 July, but does not explain why it is necessary to conduct the training just a few days before the election on 27 July.

In the absence of clear explanations from the authorities up to now, there are many possible speculations and implications. One of them is that the training exercise is to reinforce, or validate, a rumoured threat that unless the ruling party is voted back in, there will be war.

The SRP deplors such implied, or otherwise, threat and intimidation to voters. We insist that the authorities cancel, or for the benefit of the doubt, postpone the firing of the real ammunitions until the new parliament and government are sworn in.

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