



# Election Campaign Report

15 July 2003

## Campaign environment: peaceful but not fair

### Campaign Summary: June 26 – July 13, 2003

Campaign activities continue in a relatively peaceful manner, although CCHR has documented 120 cases of fraud and irregularities in the election campaign so far. There is no possibility of a fair environment for election campaigning given that village chiefs continue active work on behalf of the ruling party in spite of an Interior Ministry directive forbidding them from doing so, and only token measures have been taken to ensure fair media access.

### Summary of election-related rights violations

CASES	Signboard interference	Vote swearing	Interference in campaign activities	Voter / party card confiscation	Other
<b>During campaign*</b>	5	2	15	4	94

\*cases reported by CCHR monitors from June 26 - July 13, 2003

### Examples of campaign case reports

#### **Assault**

On July 2, 2003, a group of 15 soldiers approached a Funcinpec activist who was setting up a signboard in front of his house in Tuol Tasck village, Trapaing Prasat commune, Trapaing Prasat district, Odar Meanchey. Following some brief verbal insults the soldiers hit the activist several times with a gun, injuring his head.

#### **Party signboard interference**

(1) On June 26, 2003 a Funcinpec signboard was torn down in the village of Prey Kamprok, Taor commune, Samrong Tong district, Kampong Speu; (2) On June 27, 2003, a 30-year-old man wearing a CPP hat and T-shirt tore down a Chakrapong Khmer Spirit Party signboard and cut it into pieces in Balaing Lech village, Damrey Chankla commune, Stoeung Sen district, Kampong Thom; (3) A CPP group leader threatened one woman in Kvet village, Chrey Vien commune, Prey Chhor district, Kampong Cham province, who had erected an SRP signboard in front of her house, demanding to know who gave her permission to erect the signboard and warning her about the consequences.

#### **Campaign interference**

(1) On June 29, 2003 several SRP banners in Ang Sleng village, Ov Lok commune, Ang Snuol district in Kandal were torn down. On July 3, 2003 the Commune Election Committee held a hearing to solve this problem. The offender conceded and apologized to SRP; (2) On June 26, 2003, Peam Mean Chey, the CEC chairman of Peam Ror district, Prey Veng, threatened to confiscate cassette recordings of the SRP political platform from the SRP commune headquarters, claiming that SRP played the cassettes without his permission; (3) On July 1, 2003, SRP president Sam Rainsy and approximately 30 supporters distributed

**Murder**

Murders have occurred during the election campaign period. While most of the victims are party members, it is too early to say whether these killings were politically motivated. They do, however, reflect a continuing culture of violent crime and impunity for serious criminal acts – since no perpetrator has been arrested in any case.

**Threats against media**

In a letter dated July 1, 2003, Secretary of State for Information Khieu Kanharith ordered the Battambang Information Department Chief to suspend live broadcasting of FM 90.25 in Battambang, stating that these broadcasts did not conform to (unspecified) regulations. However, Chhor Poan Reachsey Company president Nhem Sophana confirmed that he was permitted by the Minister of Information Lu Laysreng in a letter dated June 11, 2003, to broadcast FM 90 programming on FM90.25 in Battambang.

On July 6, 2003, Information Ministry Secretary of State Khieu Kanharith threatened to suspend Beehive radio station FM105 if it did not stop broadcasting *Radio Free Asia* and *Voice of America* transmissions.

**Threats (general)**

(1) On June 26, 2003, village chiefs and group chiefs in Peamraing commune, Lek Dek district, Kandal threatened citizens and prevented them from joining an election campaign activity with SRP leader Sam Ra, stating that if they did so their names and photographs would be registered and taken; (2) On July 1, 2003 a senior civil servant led a rally in Kbal Thnol village, Kampong Preang commune, Sangke district, Battambang, providing people with CPP hats and T-shirts. At this rally, this individual spoke to a Funcinpec member telling him that if the CPP vote decreased in that community, this party member, who had erected a Funcinpec signboard at his house, would "bear responsibility".

**Village Chief Involvement in Political Activities**

A 27 May 2003 Ministry of Interior/National Election Committee directive bars village chiefs from acting in support of any party or candidate.

**Voter card collection**

(1) On June 26, 2003, the Boeung Chhouk village chief, at Kilometer 6, Khan Reussey Keo, Phnom Penh, collected voter cards from the citizens saying that authorities would give them presents; (2) On July 2, 2003, the village chief of Veal Traeng, Talun commune, Saang district, Kandal, told a CCHR monitor that he had received orders from the commune chief to collect voter cards from the bearers and record the voter card numbers.

**Swearing and thumbprinting**

(1) On July 2, 2003, the village chief of Kanseng, Khon Roang commune, Boribo district, Kampong Chhnang, forced two people to swear an oath to vote for CPP saying that if they did not, they would die; (2) On July 9, 2003, the village chief of Svay Ampear, Svay Ampear commune, Mukampoul district, Kandal, forced one couple to support CPP by printing their thumbs.

**Other cases**

(1) On June 28, 2003, village chiefs in Dei-eth commune, Kien Svay district, Kandal hung CPP banners in front of every house; (2) On 27-28 June, Srei Prang and Kok Vat village chiefs in Odar Meanchey told CCHR monitors that they had attended a meeting with provincial and district CPP party leaders at which they were given instructions on how to campaign for CPP. Village chiefs in Pong Ro, Cha'ab and Tmei villages attended CPP campaign events and distributed materials; (3) On June 28, 2003, the village chief of Samrong Kandal, Samrong Kandal commune, Prey Nob district, Sihanoukville forced a couple to give him back a sarong and a T-shirt which he had given to them on June 19, 2003. The couple had been forbidden from joining SRP rally by the village chief on June 20, 2003.