



FUNCINPEC PARTY
Secretariat-General

Position Statement of the FUNCINPEC Party
On Illegal Immigration

It has been said recently, in the Cambodian and English language press, that nationalism and racial rhetoric have been invoked in the present electoral campaign. This is not an issue of racial rhetoric or discrimination, but a legitimate defense of the rights of citizens of a legal State. The FUNCINPEC Party, under the high leadership of H.R.H. Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh, wishes to make our position on this issue clear and unequivocal.

The duties of government are first and foremost to guarantee the security and well-being of our citizens. It is incumbent on us to provide for the welfare of all Cambodians, to defend the interests of our nation, and the peace and security of our people. The issue of illegal immigration is indeed one of national interests. We must create and maintain an environment in which our people are free to work, to strive to improve the conditions of their lives and those of their children. While Cambodia has made strides in development, we are still a poor country; our people must be free to work unfettered by competition from outside. At this writing, millions of foreign nationals are in our country illegally. Many of them are holding voter cards without being Khmer citizen.

Every country is interested in securing jobs and resources for its own people first. All countries have laws to regulate the influx of non-citizens who wish to immigrate for the purposes of work. Most countries, including France, the US, Britain, Australia, and Japan, have offices and even ministries dedicated to this purpose. They apply their immigration laws very severely to protect citizens and to turn back those who enter illegally. While Cambodia has laws to regulate immigration, they are loosely enforced. The FUNCINPEC Party has the rights and obligations to defend the rights of our people and our national integrity. We will respond to the challenge of illegal immigration by establishing a ministry-level Office of Immigration that will further develop sound policies and see to their proper and just implementation.

As we seek to protect our citizens by reducing the numbers of illegal workers, at the same time, we condemn unequivocally and disavow invective and violence against those perceived to be in violation of immigration laws.

Now there is one form of migration that the FUNCINPEC Party finds inherently evil. The trafficking of human beings, for the sex trade and illegal labor, continues to plague our nation and region. Every year, thousands are lured, tricked, and forced into virtual

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slavery. This repugnant, unholy trade must be brought to an end. As the governing party, we will tackle this issue head-on. We will seek out, prosecute to the full, and punish those responsible for this loathsome, unholy trade: the traffickers and their customers - not their unwilling victims.

The FUNCINPEC Party embraces our Khmer culture even as we celebrate the diversity of other traditions already thriving in Cambodia. As Buddhist, we do not hate anyone. We welcome those who will immigrate legally to our country, for they will further enrich our society. But let us be clear: we are unwavering in our stand against all forms of illegal immigration even as we are unwavering in disavowing and condemning invective and violence as responses.

Phnom Penh, 10 July 2003
The General-Secretariat