
cc:Mail for: Chris

Subject: HRW on Takeo Grenade Attack

▶ **Forwarded:** Phnom Penh Post 4/30/98 5:09 PM

To: editor at CM17

To: chris at CM17

RIGHTS ORGANIZATION CONDEMNS TAKEO GRENADE ATTACK

For immediate release: April 29, 1998

For further information contact:

Sidney Jones

+1 212 216-1228 (O)

+1

718 788-2899 (H)

Mike Jendrzeczyk

+1 202 371-6592, x113 (O)

+1 301

565-5824 (H)

Human Rights Watch today condemned a deadly April 25 grenade attack on the home of the family of a Cambodian opposition activist from the Son Sann Party. The incident, in the southeastern province of Takeo, may have been in part politically motivated, Human Rights Watch charged. In a separate incident on April 26, the Son Sann Party president in Tramkak District of Takeo reported that several shots were fired in front of his house, but no one was wounded.

The organization said the April 25 attack, which resulted in two dead and three wounded, was the latest in a series of violent incidents involving political party members running against the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) of Second Prime Minister Hun Sen in elections slated for July 1998.

Human Rights Watch called on the Cambodian government to conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice. "Impunity for perpetrators of this kind of violence may deter Cambodians from taking an active role in opposition parties," said Sidney Jones, executive director of the Asia Division of Human Rights Watch. "If people are afraid to join the opposition, the credibility of the elections will be jeopardized."

According to Human Rights Watch, recent incidents of political violence in Cambodia have included assassinations of senior officials of the Funcinpec Party of Prince Ranariddh -- ousted by Hun Sen in last year's coup -- as well as killings of lower-level opposition party workers and families of members of the armed resistance in the countryside. Human Rights Watch has called on international donors to postpone election aid or technical assistance until minimum conditions for a fair electoral process have been met.

"Donors should not be supporting a flawed process as the least bad of several unsatisfactory options," said Jones. "Instead they should be working actively to reduce or eliminate those flaws; in particular by exerting sufficient pressure on the Cambodian government to prosecute clear cases of extrajudicial executions, conducted not only during and immediately after the July 1997 coup, but also these more recent cases as well. Donors should be making an end to this kind of impunity a precondition for any kind of election assistance."

In the April 25 incident, a grenade was thrown in front of the house of the
