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Cambodian League for the Promotion and
Defense of Human Rights

Copy: Padd file
original:
Matthew -
Michael -
Nate -

N° 1002

May 21st, 1995

Mr. Sum Mean
Agence Khmère de Presse (AKP)

Dear sir,

In reference to the AKP article entitled "51 prisoners in Siem Reap province break detention gate out", I find the information very misleading to your readers and wish to clarify our position.

Foremost, in Cambodia and other countries, security in prisons is the responsibility of the local prison administration.


As a Cambodian human rights organization, LICADHO, has been able to visit prisons in Phnom Penh and the provinces to monitor prison conditions and ensure that prisoners are treated fairly and have access to legal representation.

On Friday morning between 8:15-8:30 AM, LICADHO's investigator was interviewing a prisoner in a private cell when he overheard some noise. According to the investigator and two other sources, including a high ranking prison official, a group of between 53-57 prisoners ran towards the gate as an individual was leaving the prison compound. 7 prisoners were taken to the hospital and one prisoner died.

Your article mentioned that the prisoners ran to the gate that was opened for a visit from LICADHO's staff. This information is false and may lead your readers to believe that human rights organizations are responsible for this event. Finally, I wish to add that, due to the cooperation of the Siem Reap prison administration, the remaining prisoners have not been treated badly since this unfortunate event.

I hope that you will print this letter so as to clarify our position to your readers. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional queries.

Sincerely,


Naly Pilorge
LICADHO

cc members of the Human Rights Action Committee
General Na Sa Heang, director of the prison administration at the Ministry of Interior
Pin Sokhun, president of KJA
Daniel Premont, UN Centre for Human Rights

51 PRISONERS IN SIEM REAP PROVINCE BREAK DETENTION GATE OUT

PHNOM PENH AKP MAY 20 - Fifty one prisoners in Siem Reap province broke the detention gate out on May 19. ✓

According to provincial police source the prisoners had been freed from the different detention cells and got together on the park in the prison compound waiting for a visit from the Human Rights group "LICADHO".

The source said the 51 prisoners run out through the prison main gate while the security guard opened gate for the human rights group to enter for a visit to prisoners.

It said that the provincial police captured 23 detainees back to the prison the ~~same~~ day, two were injured and one killed, and the remaining 25 had been locked for by the police.