

The Honorable John McCain
Senator of Arizona
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
U. S. A.
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December 30, 1998

Dear Senator McCain,

On behalf of the oppressed Cambodian people and as the leader of the parliamentary opposition in my unfortunate country, I beg you to support and approve United States Senate draft Resolution # 309 intended to help put an end to impunity for the most serious human rights violations in Cambodia.

As elaborated in the documents attached herewith, Cambodian democrats consider and turn to the United States of America as the conscience of the world. No other Parliament in the world is more sensitive to the lingering sufferings of the Cambodian people than the American Congress, as recently shown by House Resolution # 533 adopted on October 2, 1998.

Since the Second World War, Cambodia is probably the country with the worst records of human rights violations. Nevertheless, since the Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot took over in 1975, not a single human rights violator has been arrested and prosecuted. The reason for this revolting situation is simple and obvious: human rights violators have been in power in Cambodia ever since 1975, institutionalizing a tradition of violence and promoting a culture of impunity.

Current Prime Minister Hun Sen is a former Khmer Rouge military commander who, since taking over from Pol Pot in 1979, has always continued to implement methods reminiscent of the Khmer Rouge style of government, such as the "K5" or "Bamboo Wall" deadly project in the mid-80's and the systematic physical elimination of political opponents throughout the 90's. No serious investigation has ever been made following any human rights violation because any serious investigation would lead to the powerful people in government who control the police, the army and the judiciary. This is why impunity continues to prevail, leading to a never-ending cycle of violence and maintaining Cambodia in a state of lawlessness and misery.

On Christmas day this year Hun Sen showed his real face to the world: he welcomed and guaranteed impunity for Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea, respectively former Head of State and second top ranking communist official in charge of ideology under the Pol Pot regime. Now the old killers and the new killers are together, uniting their forces, telling the same lies to the world and protecting each other.

As a matter of principle, all criminals, whether they are retired, disguised, in hiding, on the run or in power must face charges before a court and be tried with due process. But criminals in power are the most dangerous ones. It is why I beg you to support and approve S.R. 309 to appeal to the American Administration to collect all evidence against Hun Sen as a criminal who seriously violated international laws on human rights and to push for the creation of an international tribunal to consider this evidence in order to support a prosecution.

With my deepest gratitude and my most profound respect for your stance in favor of democracy and justice, and my best wishes for a Happy New Year 1999,

Sam Rainsy

Sam Rainsy
Member of Parliament
Leader of the Opposition
Former Minister of Finance