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SAM RAINSY PARTY
PARTI SAM RAINSY

សីលធម៌ សច្ចធម៌ យុត្តិធម៌

STATEMENT

August 4, 1998

LINDER'S ONE PERCENT SOLUTION

Ambassador Sven Linder, the chair of the Joint International Observer Group, reported on July 27 that JIOG teams "covered" an average of ten polling stations each, amounting to 2000-2300 polling centers.

JIOG observers have said they took an average of 20 minutes to "cover" each polling station. Allowing them 30 minutes each (which would amount to five hours of observing and four hours of travel time between stations), and accepting Ambassador Linder's upper figure of 2300 polling stations, there were 1150 hours of JIOG observing. Compared to the 105,300 total hours of polling on July 26, it is clear that:

At best, JIOG observed barely over one percent of the polling on July 26.

This hardly qualifies JIOG or its chair to make sweeping statements about fairness at the polls, let alone to say that the outcome of the election reflects "in a credible way, the will of the Cambodian people." This is especially true considering that according to Ambassador Linder, JIOG covered only "193 or 198" of the over 1600 counting centers. We do not know for how long they covered those few centers.

In its July 27 statement, the JIOG pledged to "continue to observe the Electoral Process in the most thorough way possible."

Now the JIOG appears to be falling far short of this commitment too. In a conversation with Sam Rainsy on August 3, Ambassador Linder refused to consider or answer in writing our written proposal for a fair recounting process, saying that any such proposal would have to come from the National Election Committee, and that it would be rejected regardless for lack of funds and personnel.

We hope that in the future the JIOG and its chair will refrain from drawing broad conclusions on the basis of isolated incidents. We further hope that the JIOG will make clear the exact extent of the its capacity to observe and analyze the ongoing electoral process, instead of making extravagant claims in public and then absolving itself of responsibility in private.