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THE KHMER KAMPUCHEA KROM COMMUNITY
LA COMMUNAUTÉ DU KHMER KAMPUCHEA KROM

Statement

Hon. Thach Setha

Phnom Penh Municipality Councilman

Executive Director of the Khmer Kampuchea Krom Community

Former Senator of the Kingdom of Cambodia

On occasion of the 61st International Human Rights Anniversary

December 10, 1948 – December 10, 2009

May I pay my sacred homage to the Sanghas

My respect to Excellencies and honor guests

My respect to Compatriots with profound affection

Today the Khmer Kampuchea Krom Community, KKC, is celebrating the International Human Rights Anniversary with other peoples in the world despite the Khmer Kampuchea Krom people have never benefited from the Dec. 10 International Human Rights Day in the last 61 years and have never known what human rights is.

While other nations and peoples in the world are celebrating joyously the human rights anniversary in the 61 years of the founding, December 10, 1948 – December 10, 2009, more than 13 millions Khmer Kampuchea Krom people are being violated severely of their human rights on their own ancestral land by the authorities of colonial Vietnam, presently the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

When talk about human rights violations in the world, do not disregard the human rights violations in Vietnam, especially the Khmer Kampuchea Krom.

61 years have passed, the fundamental human rights have been violated blatantly by the authorities of colonial Vietnam upon the Khmer Kampuchea Krom people without consequences. The authorities of colonial Vietnam have effectively used treacherous means to conceal their dirty activities indiffered to the Democratic Kampuchea of Pol Pot. The lives of the Khmer Kampuchea Krom people are for torturing at the hands of the colonial Vietnamese authorities waiting for their death sentence to be carried out with no escape.

The gathering of the Khmer Kampuchea Krom people on this extraordinary occasion is to send our message to the international community, especially the United Nations, and the countries that advance justice and human rights that despite presently the countries in the world are receiving their human rights and the protection and defense of human rights by the international community, the Khmer Kampuchea Krom people's human rights are severely being violated by the authorities of colonial Vietnam. Besides the arrest, detention and torturing of the Khmer

Buddhist monks and people viciously that led to their deaths by the hundreds and the imprisonment of 4,248 Khmers in 1985-87, today this authoritarian country continues to suppress, repress the Khmers in right of religion, right of politics, right of assembly, right of economics (commerce), right of native language schooling, right of expression, right of media, etc.

1. Right of Religion: Ninety nine percents (99%) of the Khmer Kampuchea Krom people are Theravada Buddhist adherents. Today Khmer Buddhism, no longer independent from the State, is administered by Vietnam's state-run religious agency and strictly monitored our activities. Khmer Buddhist monks are ordered by authorities to practice communist doctrine. Severe punishment for any opinions, dissents in the form of arrest, detention and force to defrock against their will and Buddhist rule; force Buddhist monks to raise livestock and do people's labor against Buddhist teaching; and force the Khmer Buddhist monasteries to make financial donation to the State.
2. Right of Politics: Prohibit Khmers from discussing their country's issues and politics. Referencing Khmer Krom and Kampuchea Krom issues will land any persons in jail.
3. Right of Assembly: The authorities of colonial Vietnam prohibit the Khmer Kampuchea Krom people from establishing their associations and non-governmental organizations on their own ancestral land in order to protect the rights and interest of their own community and people. The Vietnamese state-sponsored Khmer Buddhist associations are created to effectively control all the Khmer Buddhist monks.
4. Right of Economics (Commerce): Nine five percents (95%) of the Khmer Kampuchea Krom people are farmers. Many lands that used to belong to the Khmer people, the indigenes, were collectivized and redistributed and outrightly confiscated their land that lead them to have less land to farm and thus their livelihood is reduced to living in destitute. Many are forced to abandon their traditional farming for big cities, towns and other provinces to work for the Vietnamese nationals.
5. Right of Native Language Schools: The mere low quantities of indigenous language schools within the compound of the Khmer Buddhist monasteries are for public and international show and token. Prohibit Khmers from learning Khmer (Cambodian) geography and history. Teachers and students are closely being watched by the authorities. Term of imprisonment is inevitable if any persons dare to talk about Khmer geography, history and politics.
6. Right of Expression: Khmer Buddhist monks and people are banned from organizing strike, demonstration or any forms of expressions.
7. Right of Media: The usage of internet and emails to communicate with the outsiders and listen to the U.S. Voice of America and Radio Free Asia is prohibited. There is zero Khmer native language news print. Low numbers of news media such as magazines, radio and television are available through state-sponsored and closely being scrutinized prior to publication to propagandize Vietnam's communist party upon the Khmer population.

Your Highest Venerables, Venerables
Compatriots, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this special day, in the name of Khmer people, who were and are the victims of all human rights violations, I urge the Royal Government of Cambodia to permit the Khmers of Kampuchea Krom to gather in public, march or demonstrate in order to express our voice to request, protect or demand for what we want and to exercise our citizens' rights in accordance to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia in safeguarding and protecting the interest of Khmers living abroad, especially Khmer Kampuchea Krom people in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and to re-examine the 2007 mysterious murder case of Buddhist monk Ven. Eang Sokthoeun of Tronom Jring Monastery in Ang Snuol district, Kandal province, Cambodia.

Through today's meeting also, we appeal to the international organizations and numerous countries that uphold and promote human rights, especially the United Nations, to review human rights practice of signatory countries that ratified the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights within the last 61 years whether they respect their citizens' rights in accordance to the international declaration, covenants, treaties, sub-treaties, and standard on human rights. In the case that any signatory countries do not abide by or continue committing human rights violations, please utilize any means and tools available to ensure that that country abides by them, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a case in point.

On other hand, we appeal to the United Nations with the following requests:

1. To establish human rights commission in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to investigate human rights violations committing by the Government of Vietnam upon their own citizens, especially the Khmer Kampuchea Krom people.
2. Take serious measure in ensuring that the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam abides by and respects human rights, religious beliefs and the rights of the indigenes in accordance to the international declaration, covenant, treaties and standard on human rights.
3. Ensure that the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam ceases immediately the confiscation of land from the Khmer Kampuchea Krom community and return all the lands that had been seized in past years; and cease immediately all forced activities upon the Khmer Buddhist monasteries to make financial donations to the State.

In conclusion, I would like to pray that this year's human rights be achieved by all human beings around the world, especially the Khmer Kampuchea Krom people; and may all Buddhist monks, honor guests, guests, and compatriots achieve the four blessings of Lord Buddha: Longevity, Status, Healthiness, and Strength in indefinite.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Phnom Penh December 10, 2009

Original text in Khmer (Cambodian)