

## NATIONAL

## Extra Hurdles Set for New Political Party

Sam Rainsy would have to sign his name 667 times

By ZSOMBOR PETER  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

The Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) and Human Rights Party (HRP) claim that the Interior Ministry has created an arbitrary new rule for establishing new political parties that would delay their planned merger.

The SRP and HRP are attempting to merge ahead of next year's national elections under the banner of a new party, the National Salvation Party, in a bid to challenge the ruling CPP at the polls.

SRP lawmaker Son Chhay said the two opposition parties were planning to submit the required list of 4,000 members of the National Salvation Party early this week as part of the registration process. But, Mr. Chhay said he received a call from the Interior Ministry telling them to meet new conditions "outside the law."

Specifically, he said, the ministry told the new party's president, Sam Rainsy, to sign every page on the list of members' names. The ministry also asked the party to place just six names on every page, meaning that Mr. Rainsy would be required to sign 667 separate pieces of paper before the list can be submitted. Mr. Rainsy has lived in self-imposed exile in Europe for several years.

Mr. Chhay said the extra work would not stop their merger plans but would slow them down. He added that he was troubled that the new conditions imposed by the Interior Ministry are not spelled out in the Law on Political Parties, which governs the registration of new parties.

"This is quite a lot of work," he said. "It will take us at least another week to do it."

HRP spokesman Pol Ham said he met yesterday with the Interior Ministry's director of political affairs to discuss the registration process. He confirmed that the SRP and HRP were being asked to have the new party's president sign each sheet of paper before registration documents can be submitted.

Lieutenant General Khieu Sopheap, and Interior Ministry spokesman, said he knew of no such requirement, and denied that new conditions had been set for the joint opposition party. "There are no new rules, only the rules provided by law. The Ministry of Interior is using the law; there is nothing outside this," he said.

He also accused the opposition of making false claims to "confuse the public opinion."

## Japanese NGO Admonishes Forced Evictions

By LAUREN CROTHERS  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

A Tokyo-based human rights group has called on the government to cease forced evictions, and branded the use of armed forces against ordinary citizens defending their land as an "unforgivable human rights violation."

Human Rights Now (HRN), which in June sent a team of Japanese investigators to Cambodia to interview people affected by economic land concessions, released the results of its mission yesterday.

HRN said the government's granting of economic land concessions to private companies had come at the expense of communities across the country, many of whom are forced off their land or locked in long-running disputes with the leasing firms.

"When residents fight or protest against these land policies, the Cambodian government takes

forceful means, which constitute serious human rights violations, including the dispatch of troops, suppression by violence, illegal arrest and prosecution, and the attack and threat to human rights defenders," the report states.

HRN said that one of the most serious incidents was the May 16 killing of a 14-year-old girl, Heng Chantha, in Kratie province during an eviction operation by hundreds of police and soldiers.

"The Human Rights Now investigation team interviewed the girl's family and other people who witnessed the incident, and it was revealed that the army and the police had shot into the girl's house," the report says. "These incidents cannot be tolerated, because the killing of the girl is an extrajudicial killing attributed [to] armed forces, and the attack toward residents by firearms is an illegal action."

Ministry of Interior spokesman

Lieutenant General Khieu Sopheap said the shooting death of the teenage girl in Kratie was an accident.

"We are very regretful about that incident, but it happened accidentally, without the intention of making any trouble," Lt. Gen. Sopheap said of Heng Chantha's killing. "The case is now with the court, and we will send documents."

But four months on from the shooting, provincial prosecutor Chat Soreaksmeay said she was unsure whether the court was investigating anything related to the shooting.

"Up to this minute, I have not received any documents, but I will check with my admins," Ms. Soreaksmeay said.

Following the killing, provincial officials said there was no need to investigate the circumstance of Heng Chantha's death because it was an accident.

(Additional reporting by Kuch Naren)

## Telegram Unit Had Direct Line to Khieu Samphan

By DENE-HERN CHEN  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Witness Norng Sophang, who chaired a telegram translation unit and later taught encryption techniques under the Khmer Rouge, told the Khmer Rouge tribunal yesterday that his unit had a direct phone line to both Pol Pot and Khieu Samphan's offices.

The phone line to Khieu Samphan was necessary because the head of state's telegrams and handwritten notes sometimes needed to be clarified before they were encrypted, he said.

"If the messages were not clear, he himself or his working group would give a phone call to me to give such instructions. So it means to facilitate the smoothness of the work," Mr. Sophang said.

## Vallier Family's Remains Requested by France

By PHORN BOPHA  
AND SIMON LEWIS  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

France has requested that the remains of Laurent Vallier and his four children—who were found dead under mysterious circumstances in Kompong Speu province in January—be repatriated, officials said yesterday.

The Frenchman and his children's decomposed bodies were discovered in a car submerged in a pond behind their home. Following an investigation, Cambodian police said there was no evidence of foul play.

A probe by French investigators—which involved bone samples being sent to France for for-

nsic testing—has only confirmed that the bodies were those of the Vallier family. "[France] sent a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asking for the corpses to be sent back to France last week," National Police spokesman Kirth Chantharith said. Mr. Chantharith said that there was no reason for Cambodia to refuse the request, but he did not know when the remains would be repatriated.

Nicolas Baudouin, a spokesman for the French Embassy in Phnom Penh, confirmed by email that the request had been sent. "[T]he request is being reviewed by the [Cambodian] investigating judge," he said, adding that the French investigation into the case

was ongoing. Keo Sothea, prosecutor for the Kompong Speu Provincial Court, confirmed that he had received the request yesterday, but declined to comment further.

The remains of the father and his children were discovered after Laurent Vallier's family reported him missing. Genevieve Vallier, Laurent's mother, said in an email from France yesterday that the family was not aware of any developments in the case.

"We have been waiting since April for the return of their bodies to France but we don't know anything more," she said.

(Additional reporting by Kate Bartlett)