



គណៈកម្មាធិការកម្រិតជាតិ ទៃ អង្គការសមាគមការពារសិទ្ធិមនុស្សកម្ពុជា

CAMBODIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTION COMMITTEE

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Statement

Concerns over the land dispute in Kror ya commune, Santouk district, Kampong Thom province

The Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC), a coalition of 21 NGOs, expresses its regret and concerns over the violence that happened on November 16, 2009, caused least 9 people injured and 7 people arrested and still there are some more people that authorities are searching for the arrest, the violence has also caused the destruction of other properties.

Based on actual monitoring on the site found that after the eruption of violence, the joint competent authorities some of more than 70 people have been deployed and surrounded and closed the road access for with the aim to search for suspects for arrest and, therefore, created the situation for those people who live in that area a grave fear. Until this time, a number of seven people have been arrested by authorities under the charge of destruction of public properties and amongst of these arrested people, four of them were arrested in Kampong Cham province.

CHRAC noted that the land dispute in the area of Banteay rongeang has happened since there is presence of Vietnamese Company namely *Tan Bien Kampong Thom Aphivath Caoutchouc Co LTD*, this company has received land concession from the Cambodian government with the land size of 8100 hectares in 2007, the land concession is for the development and growing of agro-industry of rubber, this land dispute has not been resolved properly by local authorities and there was no any field study prior to the granting of land concession to this company. The land tenure by the affected people has started the year of 2004 and land was given through the land allocation by *Association of disabled military for agricultural development* before the arrival of Tan Bien Company.

CHRAC believed that the earlier resolution of land dispute between the people and Tab Bien Company did not perform according to the reality of living situation of people and principle for the exchange of land of authorities was not able to make people acceptable because of the land targeted to be exchanged or given to people is far away, with small size, lack of merits or elements in provision as a land possession. Furthermore, the authorities have caused fear against people such as shooting, threatening and secretly setting fire on the people's houses, banning of people not to travel freely, all of these factors increased even more tensions in the land dispute area.

In order to solve this case sooner and acceptable, CHRAC wishes to recommend and appeal to the royal government, provincial authorities and all classes of competent authorities to act as follow:

- Stop using the armed forces for the suppression violently against the people and open road access for people to travel in the area.
- Urgently stop the arrest of community people representatives including all forms of threatening.
- Release the arrested and detained representatives of community people for them to re-gain their freedom.

- Quickly resolve the land dispute for those affected and poor people fairly and acceptable or alternatively, undertaking of on-side upgrading by allowing people to grow rubber on their respective land and sell their rubber products to company.
- Organize to have real negotiation and in person between people and authorities.
- Establishment of joint and independent commission for dealing with this land case.

Phnom Penh, November 23, 2009

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