



# Corruption Monitor

Issue 9 - August 2008

Monthly review of corruption-related stories in the Cambodian media

NOT FOR SALE  
FOR DOCUMENTATION  
PURPOSES AMONG  
PARTNERS ONLY

## THIS MONTH

Ten of the eleven political parties participating in the Cambodian national election on July 27 promised civil society beforehand to pass the long awaited anti-corruption law within six months after being in office. The only party that failed to reply to this request, the CPP, won the elections according to the preliminary results with an overwhelming 73% of all votes, good for 90 seats at the National Assembly out of a total of 123. More than enough seats to continue this time without Funcinpec, which has been reduced to two seats only, as a new one party government. The CPP does not even need the 2006 change of the Cambodian Constitution to a 50 plus 1 percent majority formula system instead of a two thirds. Civil society therefore now has to hold on to a statement one CPP lawmaker earlier made to media that "the CPP will pass the law in the first year of the fourth mandate". Corrupt activities in the fishery business are this month's highlight on page 2.

## US OFFERS HELP IN INVESTIGATION OF MURDERED JOURNALIST

The US Embassy has condemned the slaying of Sam Rainsy Party-aligned *Moneaksekar Khmer* newspaper reporter and his son and offered their assistance in apprehending the murderers, newspapers reported July 15.

"The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), through the US Embassy, stands ready to provide assistance if requested by the Cambodian government in investigating the case," according to a press release obtained from the embassy July 14, reported *Rasmei Kampuchea*.

Khim Sambor, 47, and his son, Khat Sarinthead, 21, were shot to death near Preaputh pagoda in Phnom Penh's Prampi Makara district on July 11 by two unknown murderers after they returned from taking exercise at Olympic Stadium, wrote *Moneaksekar Khmer*.

Lieutenant Khieu Sopheak, spokesperson of the Ministry of Interior, told *Rasmei Kampuchea* that the relevant authority is searching for the attackers and "if necessary we will ask for cooperation."

Two days after the attack on the jour-

nalist, Ngor Srun, a senior member of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and a secretary of state for the Council of Ministers, was attacked with acid on Sunday morning as he got into his car after having it repaired at a garage in Phnom Penh, according to *Koh Santepheap*.

"Violent criminal acts such as these can have a chilling effect on the media and risk undermining citizens' confidence in their ability to fully participate in the electoral process in safety and security," the embassy said in the statement.

The Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM) stated that the government should accept responsibility for the assassination as 12 journalists have been killed since 1993. "Reporters in Cambodia together with the government must be in charge of unmasking murderers and their supporters and bring them to justice," the CCIM said.

"Failure to arrest murderers and their supporters is a severe threat to the security of reporters and press freedom in the country," the CCIM added.

## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH AWARD FOR TWO CAMBODIAN JOURNALISTS

Two Cambodian journalists, Chheang Bopha and Duong Sokha, are among 34 writers from 19 countries to receive the Hellman/Hammett writer's award, which recognizes courage in the face of political persecution, Human Rights Watch's website Human Rights News reported July 22.

The Human Rights Watch grants are given annually to writers around the world who have been targets of political persecution or human rights abuses. The grant program began in 1989 when the American playwright Lillian Hellman willed that her estate be used to assist writers in financial need as a result of expressing their views.

"Chheang Bopha and Duong Sokha represent a small minority among Cambodia's press corps who dare to challenge corrupt and politically biased institutions through their writings and their actions," said Sara Colm, senior Asia researcher at Human Rights Watch.

Bopha, 28, and Sokha, 27, worked as reporters at *Cambodge Soir*, Cambodia's leading French language daily newspaper. They quit in 2007 to protest the dismissal of a colleague who was fired for writing about a report by Global Witness, an international environmental organization that documented the alleged complicity of top government officials in illegal logging.

Striking Cambodian staff elected Sokha as their spokesperson to demand that *Cambodge Soir* reinstate the fired journalist and

## INFLATION, LOW SALARIES FORCE TEACHERS TO EXTORT MONEY

In an interview with Tum Paeng Snong Russei magazine, provincial teachers have shown their concern about ongoing inflation and their small salaries, which force them to extort money, even from the poorest students, to make ends meet, *Rasmei Kampuchea* reported July 6.

A teacher who declined to be named said that, on his present salary, he can only afford 50 kg of rice, so he must resort to extorting money from his students to survive, rather than focusing on the quality of his teaching.

Another interviewed teacher made a plea to the Ministry of Education to pay his US\$50 salary on time, and to the government to take immediate and effective action to lower soaring goods prices.

"No other countries in the world have salaries of only 200,000 riel [about US\$50] like we have here," he said. "Our salary cannot keep pace with goods prices."

Some teachers who live far from their schools complained that their low salaries cannot keep up with the skyrocketing price of petrol, adding that, to cope with the high prices, they have to marginalize their teaching careers, so they can then find extra work to augment their incomes.

Thong Boran, director of personnel at the Ministry of Education, said that, since 2002, the government has increased civil servants' salaries by 15 percent annually.

*Continued on page 2*

## CORRUPTION & FISHERY

\*Kien Chantha, deputy president of Stung Hav fishing community in Siهانoukville's Stung Hav district, claimed recently she received a threatening phone call from Ny Vati, deputy chief of Stung Hav district's Kampeign commune, after she had disclosed information about corruption and collusion between traders and Vati to secretly sell Stung Hav community fishing lots, **VOD** reported July 4. Chantha, whose position and safety are now under threat, also claimed other people had been pressured by Vati, who declined to comment on the allegations.

\*On National Fish Day, July 1, SRP Secretary General Eng Chhay Eang criticized a report issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries regarding procedures to prevent fishery crimes. Eang said the procedures exist on paper, but they have never actually been implemented, **RFA** reported July 5. "Fisheries officials have been colluding with corrupt traders to destroy fish at their whim," he said. Nao Thouk, director of the Fisheries Department, said the government has tried its best to put an end to fisheries crimes, but admitted recent crackdowns have not been perfect.

\*Illegal fishing abounds at the new Ta Mok dyke in Banteay Meanchey province's Anlung Veng district, **Kam-**

**puchea Thmey** reported July 8. Anonymous sources claimed fishermen used banned fishing equipment, such as battery-powered fishing equipment and dense netting, to fish. This has emptied the usually abundant dyke of fish. The sources also said a perpetrator identified as San Sovann has already been arrested once by Anlung Veng police for using illegal fishing equipment, but later they released him for a US\$150 bribe.

\*Two senior officials from the Kampong Cham Provincial Fisheries Department were accused of giving the go-ahead to traders to truck banned fish from Vietnam to the province before further distribution in Phnom Penh, **Kampuchea Thmey** reported July 10. An anonymous official claimed that for every 15-20 tons of banned fish transported the traders must bribe the two officials at least US\$5,000, adding that if traders are transporting 20-40 tons of the banned fish, they have to pay more than US\$10,000 to bribe officials stationed along the route where the fish is being transported. **Kampuchea Thmey** could not contact the two fishery officials for comment.

\*Villagers in Kampong Cham province's Koh Sotin district complained recently that Vietnamese fishermen were using illegal fishing equipment to catch fish in the Mekong River, **RFA** reported

July 22. Kim Srun, a villager in the district, said Vietnamese fishermen were using the illegal fishing equipment both day and night, but Cambodian fishery officials did not try to prevent the illicit acts. Other residents said the Mekong River would face a fish shortage if the unlawful fishing continues. Vai Kimri, an election official in Koh Sotin, said he is not sure whether the authorities failed to prevent the Vietnamese fishermen from illegally fishing because they were busy with the election or because they had been bribed by the Vietnamese.

\*On June 30, thousands of villagers in Chikreng district's Anlung Samnor commune in Siem Reap province requested Oknha Sieng Nam's intervention to open a dyke in the commune which the commune authorities are using to block a master canal in the area, **Rasmei Kampuchea** reported July 2. The residents complained that, as the canal is abundant with fish, traders bribed commune and district chiefs to close the dyke to catch fish. The villagers also said they are facing a water shortage. However, Anlung Samnor Commune Chief Seng Yorn said the building of the dyke is in accordance with the plan designed by Chikreng district authorities. After hearing the complaint through Sieng Nam, Siem Reap Provincial Governor Sou Phirin promised to have the dyke opened soon.

### Continued from page 1

guarantee editorial independence. The newspaper's owners responded by closing the paper and reopening it several months later under new editorial management. Most of the former employees eventually returned to work without reassurances of editorial independence, but Sokha and Bopha refused despite intense pressure to do so.

They both pursued far less lucrative work in journalism teaching before eventually joining forces with other journalists to start an independent internet publication in Cambodian and French, Ka-Set.

"In a climate of increased suppression of free expression and attacks against independent media - including from the highest levels of the government - few journalists dare challenge the system," said Colm. "Sokha and Bopha aim to uphold professional media standards in a country with few truly independent media outlets."

"The rare professional skills, ethics and courage exhibited by Sokha and Bopha should be applauded and encouraged, especially at a time when independent journalism in Cambodia is increasingly at risk," said Colm.

**Human Rights News, July 22, 2008**

## OPPOSITION: WE'D PASS ANTI-CORRUPTION BILL

Political parties contesting the July-27 national election were asked by NGOs to disclose their political platforms and display their will to combat corruption by approving the long-awaited anti-corruption law in a July 7 forum at World Vision headquarters in Phnom Penh, **WMC** reported July 8.

The forum was attended by the 10 political opposition parties, who vowed to quickly pass the much-needed anti-corruption bill should they are able to defeat the ruling CPP, which boycotted attend the event.

SRP Lawmaker Yim Sovann claimed rampant corruption has intensified inflation and pushed soaring fuel prices even higher.

Many NGOs called corruption an obstacle to national development and

a serious threat to poverty reduction strategies during the forum.

Licadho President Kek Galabru, who submitted over one million thumbprints to the National Assembly in an appeal to the government to endorse the draft anti-corruption law, said corruption threatens poor Cambodian nationals, its grim specter responsible for the loss of US\$300-400 million from the national budget each year.

Oum Reou, a Federation for Development of Disabled People staffer from Kampong Chhnang, complained the poor—especially those with disabilities—suffer from land encroachment by the rich and the powerful. He suggested any government elected tackle the issue through approving the anti-corruption law.

The **Corruption Monitor** of the **Clean Hand Campaign** is produced every month by **Media Consulting & Development** as part of a year-long survey commissioned by **PACT Cambodia**. During this survey the following newspapers and radio news programs are daily monitored on corruption-related stories: **Rasmei Kampuchea**, **Koh Santepheap**, **Kampuchea Thmey**, **Moneaksekar Khmer**, **Sralanh Khmer** and news broadcasts of **National Radio Kampuchea AM 918**, **FM 102 (Women Media Centre)**, **Voice of Democracy (VOD on FM 105)**

and **Radio Free Asia (RFA on FM 102)**.

This review gives an overview of samples found. Corruption-related stories brought by other media are included if found relevant.

Articles are quoted and translated as is, without any warranty as to the accuracy of the information reproduced. The **Corruption Monitor** does not necessarily reflect the views and opinion of **USAID/PACT**. For more information and corruption-related stories visit:

[www.pactcambodia.org](http://www.pactcambodia.org)  
For questions: [mmt@mcdcambodia.com](mailto:mmt@mcdcambodia.com)

## SON CHHAY PROTESTS USE OF STATE VEHICLES IN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

Sam Rainsy Party lawmaker Son Chhay has appealed to the Ministry of Interior to clamp down on people driving cars with no number plates to campaign for the parliamentary election on July 27, *Khmer Sthapana* reported July 11.

"State property and materials are not allowed to be used to campaign for any political party, according to election law. However, I observed that some government officials, police and military officials drove state cars or cars carrying

Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) or police number plates to campaign. The license plates of the cars were removed and covered with stickers or with the logo of a political party," *Khmer Sthapana* quotes him as saying in a letter sent to Interior Minister Sar Kheng July 10.

"The anarchic move is not banned and drivers of these cars are not arrested or fined as traffic police normally would do," Son Chhay added. He alleged: "This would apparently be due

to biased suggestions from Excellencies who are leaders of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and ministers."

The ministry's spokesperson, Khieu Sopheak, accepted that it is illegal, stating "Not all cars carrying RCAF or police number plates belong to the state, but some are owned by them [electoral campaigners]. It is not legal as a car with no license plate is not allowed to be driven on the streets," concluded *Khmer Sthapana*.

## RUSSIA READY FOR ANTI-CORRUPTION LAW

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has disclosed his extensive plans to combat corruption, a problem which has virtually become a tradition in the daily life of contemporary Russia, *FM 102* reported July 4.

Medvedev said that a new anti-corruption law would come into effect next year and that the fight against corruption is the responsibility of the government.

The anti-corruption law will ensure those convicted of corruption are severely punished, he added.

## HOSPITAL CHARGES EXORBITANT AMBULANCE FEES

A husband and wife sustained severe injuries in a traffic accident June 27. The victims were sent to Kampong Thom Provincial Hospital, where the doctors said the wounds were so serious that the injured couple had to be hospitalized in Phnom Penh, said an eyewitness.

One of the couple's daughters then came to the hospital with US\$500. She asked a provincial ambulance driver to urgently drive her parents to Phnom Penh for treatment, but the driver demanded US\$300. Crying, the daughter begged the driver to lower the ambulance fee to US\$150, as she reasoned

that otherwise she would only have US\$200 left to pay for medical services.

The driver replied that his superiors had ordered him to charge US\$150 per patient, but, finally, he reluctantly agreed to accept the daughter's offer.

Ambulance service lists on a notice board at the hospital clearly indicate that the cost of transporting a patient 10-50 km is 20,000 riel [about US\$5], 50-100 km is 200,000 riel [about US\$50], and 100 km upwards is 300,000 riel [about US\$75], including oxygen, emergency medication, a doctor and a nurse.

*Rasmei Kampuchea, July 10, 2008*

## US AMBASSADOR COMMENDS CCJ INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING CONTEST

The US ambassador to Cambodia Joseph Mussomeli has praised the Club of Cambodian Journalists (CCJ) for holding an investigative reporting contest, which highlighted many problems Cambodian society is facing, *Rasmei Kampuchea* reported July 1.

Speaking at the competition award ceremony June 28, the ambassador cited the unsurpassed importance of the role of the media in promoting transpar-

ency in a democratic society. He said Cambodian reporters should be more courageous and rid themselves of self-censorship so they can freely report on every aspect of Cambodia.

CCJ President Pen Simithy said that investigative reporting plays a crucial role in creating "a culture of transparency" and in combating corruption, and he expressed his deepest thanks to the US embassy for backing the CCJ's orga-

nizing of the contest.

Five reporters were given awards at the ceremony; Oum Layum, a reporter from *Rasmei Kampuchea*; second place to Leang Deluxe, reporter from weekly French-Khmer newspaper *Cambodge Soir*; third place to Ung Sophea, also from *Cambodge Soir*; fourth place to Hang Mony, reporter from *Social Magazine*; and fifth place to Neth Pheakra, reporter from former *Somme Thmey*.

## SIEM REAP PRISON AWASH WITH GRAFT PRISON TERM SOUGHT FOR FORMER SAMSUNG BOSS

Irregularities in Siem Reap Provincial Prison have been unveiled in a letter to the Ministry of Interior's Director General of the Prison Department, Heng Hak, and Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng requesting they investigate ongoing wrongdoings committed by the provincial prison director against his subordinates and inmates, *Kampuchea Thmey* reported July 16.

In his July 4 letter Tep Rumanea, provincial prison office manager, alleged that Provincial Prison Chief Chhem Savuth had embezzled salaries of prison inspectors, disregarded his subordinates, set up a market in the prison where goods are sold at grossly inflated prices by his

wife and had warned he would bribe his superiors to remove any prison officials who oppose him.

The letter also accused Chhem Savuth of taking prisoners to work at his home and allowing his son Chhem Soheat to laud it over older provincial prison officials, extort money from prisoners after relatives' visits and force them to buy from the prison market.

Through his letter, Tep Rumanea asked Heng Hak and Sar Kheng to find justice for Siem Reap Prison officials and to oust Chhem Savuth from his post.

Chhem Savuth could not be contacted for comment on the allegations.

South Korean prosecutors at Seoul's Central District Court July 10 asked the court to sentence former Samsung Chairman Lee Kun Hee to seven year in prison for tax evasion and breach of trust, *Koh Santepheap* reported July 11.

The prosecutors also demanded that Lee be fined US\$350 million for the charges that led him to resign as head of the Samsung Group.

Lee, 66, was also accused of being responsible for share transactions in the mid-1990s that illegally transferred powers in the company to his son Lee Jae Yong.

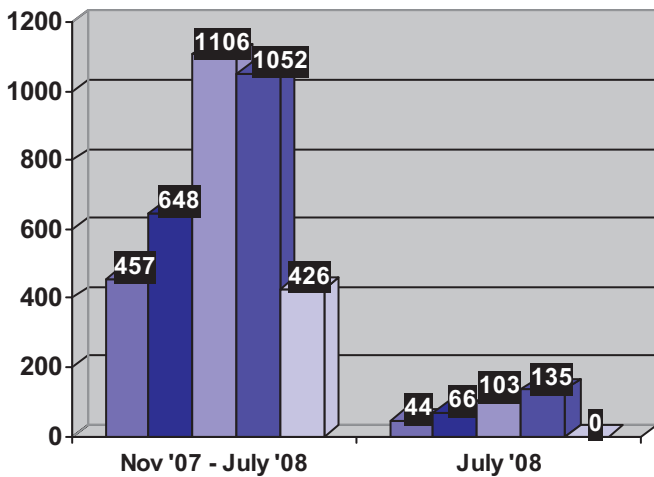
Lee, one of South Korea's richest men and an iconic business figure, resigned from his position in the Samsung conglomerate in April. However, he was spared prison time, even though tax evasion in South Korea carries a possible sentence of up to life.

Some prosecutors claimed that Lee's arrest would not be possible as it could cause a standstill in the whole Samsung Group.

UPDATE SURVEY ON CORRUPTION-RELATED STORIES

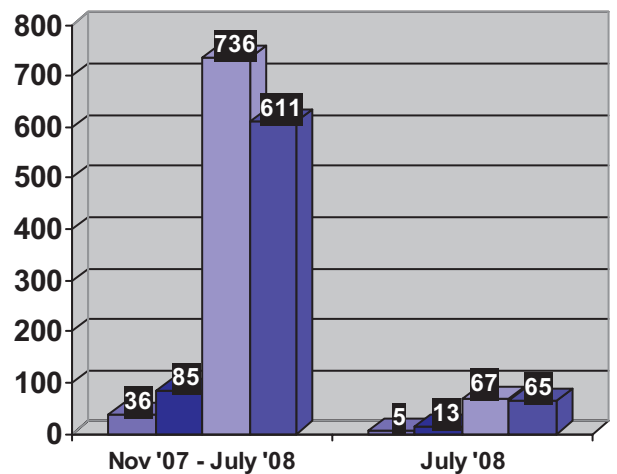
តម្រង់ថ្មីនៃការស្រាវជ្រាវស្តីពីអត្តសញ្ញាណដែលទាក់ទងនឹងអំពើពុករលួយ

Corruption-related stories per newspaper



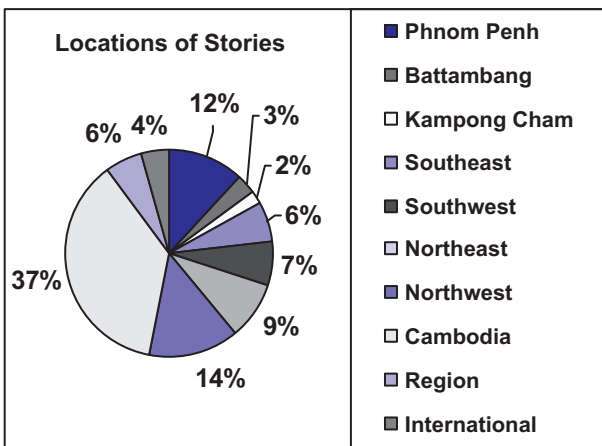
- Koh Santepheap
- Rasmei Kampuchea
- Kampuchea Thmey
- Moneaksekar Khmer
- Sralanh Khmer

Corruption-related stories per radio program

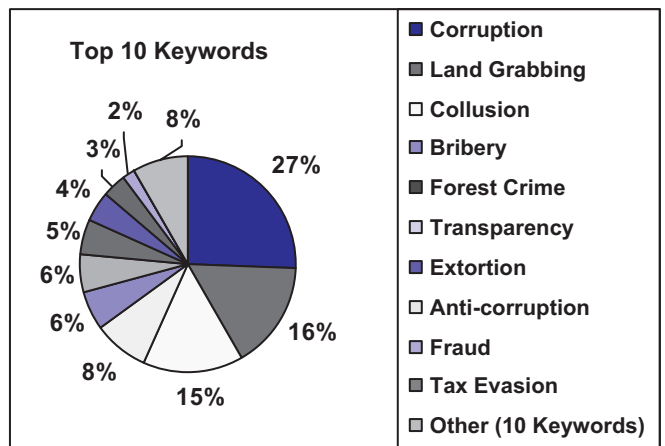


- AM 918
- FM 102
- VOD on FM 105
- RFA on FM 105

Locations of Stories



Top 10 Keywords



Between November 2007 and October 2008 all stories of five main Cambodian newspapers and four main radio news broadcasts are monitored daily on twenty keywords related to corruption. The survey assesses all stories on both quantitative and qualitative parameters. Above the ninth update with quantitative findings for November 1 to July 31.

In July *Sralanh Khmer*, since March already infrequently published, did not appear in the news stands at all anymore. This is a main explanation for the significant drop in the number of corruption stories found in newspapers in July: 348, sixty stories less than in June. Another reason which also explains the lower number of radio stories on corruption in July, is the focus of all media on the Preah Vihear conflict with Thailand and of course the national election of July 27.

ចន្លោះពីខែវិច្ឆិកា ឆ្នាំ២០០៧ និង ខែតុលា ឆ្នាំ២០០៨ គ្រប់រឿងទាំងអស់ដែលប្រមូលបានពីកាសែតជាភាសាខ្មែរចំនួន៥ និង វិទ្យុចំនួន៤ សំខាន់ៗត្រូវបានត្រួតពិនិត្យជាប្រចាំថ្ងៃលើពាក្យសំខាន់ៗចំនួន ២០ ដែលទាក់ទងនឹងអំពើពុករលួយ ។

ការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ វាយតម្លៃលើរឿងទាំងអស់ ទាំងគុណភាព និងបរិមាណ។ ខាងលើនេះជាព័ត៌មានថ្មីទី៩ ជាមួយនិងលទ្ធផលនៃបរិមាណរឿងពីខែវិច្ឆិកា ថ្ងៃទី០១ ដល់ខែកក្កដា ថ្ងៃទី៣១ ។

នៅក្នុងខែកក្កដា កាសែតស្រលាញ់ខ្មែរ ដែលចាប់តាំងពីខែមីនា មកមានការចុះផ្សាយមិនទៀងទាត់នោះ មិនបានលេចមុខនៅតូបកាសែតទៀតទេ ។ នេះជាការពន្យល់ដ៏សំខាន់មួយចំពោះការធ្លាក់ចុះយ៉ាងគំហុកនូវចំនួនរឿងពុករលួយ ដែលគេបានរកឃើញនៅក្នុងកាសែតខែកក្កដា ដែលមានចំនួនរឿងសរុប ៣៤៨រឿង តិចជាងខែមិថុនា ចំនួន ៦០រឿង ។ ហេតុផលមួយទៀតដែលទាក់ទងនឹងការធ្លាក់ចុះ ចំនួនរឿងពុករលួយតាមវិទ្យុ គឺដោយសារប្រព័ន្ធផ្សព្វផ្សាយទាំងអស់ផ្តោតចំណាប់អារម្មណ៍លើជម្លោះប្រឆាំងព្រះវិហាររវាងប្រទេសកម្ពុជា និង ថៃ និងលើការបោះឆ្នោតជាតិថ្ងៃទី២៧ ខែកក្កដា ។