

# ***CAMBODIA: CIVIL UNREST***

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## ***The Context***

Factional fighting over the weekend of 5 July between forces loyal to Co-Prime Minister Hun Sen and Co-Prime Minister Prince Ranariddh resulted in the ousting of Prince Ranariddh who had fled the country shortly before the hostilities began, at least 65 soldiers and civilians dead, scores of injured, and widespread looting.

Despite Hun Sen and the Cambodian Peoples Party (CPP) maintaining their firm control in Phnom Penh, the uneasy calm still persists in the city: roads, markets and schools remain open but many international flights have yet to resume.

Many thousands of homeless families remain in and around the city and there is little sign that the majority of the estimated 6,000 foreign nationals who fled the capital will return in the near future. The suspension of aid by many important donor countries continues, and the indefinite postponement of Cambodia's entry into ASEAN (the association of South East Asian Nations) was confirmed at ASEAN's meeting in Kuala Lumpur this week.

There are few signs that foreign donors, investors or tourists will return to Cambodia in the immediate or near future. Many analysts believe that this situation will persist in the run up to the planned elections in May 1998 and probably beyond. The loss of donor and investor confidence and the drastic reduction in the revenue from tourism will have a rapid and lasting negative effect on the Cambodian economy and workforce.

Many Cambodians - particularly those with connections to Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC - continue to fear intimidation. UN officials and Human Rights workers believe that at least 42 people have been executed since the fighting, and all would appear to have been supporters of Prince Ranariddh.

Low level clashes and skirmishes between CPP forces and troops loyal to Ranariddh continue in the far North of the country resulting in an indeterminate number of displaced people. It is only confirmed that 200 families have fled the fighting in Samrong, and some 10,000 to 20,000 residents of a market town near the Thai border are packed and ready to flee if the fighting escalates which now appears unlikely. A report of 5,000 refugees along the Thai border near Poipet remains unconfirmed and speculative.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

The Red Cross continues to respect a 2200 to 0600 curfew in Phnom Penh.

The Finance and Administration delegate returned to Phnom Penh on 16 July from Kuala Lumpur and along with the HoD, Branch Development Delegate, and the French Red Cross delegate continues to provide assistance to the CRCS, as does the Australian Red Cross Delegation.

The remaining three AmCross delegates departed for Bangkok on Sunday 20 July where it is expected they will remain until the AmCross considers the situation in Phnom Penh to be safe and secure. In the meantime the Federation delegation in Cambodia continues to support American Red Cross local staff to ensure their office remains open.

The HoD of the Federation with close support from Asia & Pacific department continues to liaise closely with ICRC, National Societies with bilateral programmes who are remaining in country regarding security issues and support of CRCS.

Mr. Ouk Damry, First Deputy Secretary General has returned to the country and has assumed the role of acting Secretary General and Madame Bun Rany Hun Sen continues in her capacity as First vice-president, to be the *de facto* President of CRCS (Cambodian Red Cross Society).

After the cessation of hostilities CRCS has assisted the victims of the disaster as follows:

- Distributed cans of fish, cans of meat, sarongs, kromas and blankets to 106 patients at Calmette and Preah Ket Mealea hospitals in Phnom Penh who were injured in the fighting
- Carried out assessments in co-operation with NGOs and the local authorities in four districts and 16 communes of Phnom Penh where the following statistics were recorded:

Nos. of affected families:	735
Nos. of affected people:	4239
Nos. of wounded:	86
Nos. of dead:	17
Nos. of houses destroyed.	566

Distributions were organised and carried out on 15 and 25 July with 75 kits and 38 Mt. of rice distributed.

- Surveys are currently being conducted in affected provinces to determine needs.

CRCS convened a meeting attended by representatives of UN, IOs, NGO and the Japanese government on 21 July at CRCS HQ and chaired by Madame Bun Rany Hun Sen. The purpose of the meeting was to brief the group on the situation, report on CRCS's response so far, reactivate the Emergency Response Group (ERG), to urge donors to provide further assistance to be channelled through CRCS for the victims of the disaster, and to appeal to the local and international community to assist CRCS to replenish emergency stocks distributed to the victims. This was a local appeal.

As the situation develops and additional needs become known further information will be provided to the National Societies.

## ***Conclusion***

Despite the fact that Hun Sen and the CPP appear to be firmly in control of the capital and much of the countryside the security situation remains tense and unpredictable. The Federation delegation will continue its vital and pivotal role, assessing and monitoring the situation, assisting and supporting the CRCS and co-operating and liaising with ICRC, National Societies, IOs, NGOs and UN to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

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