

From:

His Excellency Sar Kheng
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior
Ministry of Interior
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Date:

Dear Minister,

On 20th April 2007, 105 families of fishermen and beach vendors were forcibly evicted from Mittapheap 4 village (also named Spean Ches), on the outskirts of Sihanoukville and thus made homeless. Some 150 members of the security forces, including military, shot in the air and on the ground, while demolishing and burning down houses and beating people with electric batons. Eighteen villagers, 13 men and five women, and two policemen, were injured.

As of March 2008 over 90 of the families live in basic shelters on the roadside near their former village where they lack drinking water and basic sanitation, and struggle to make ends meet after losing the land on which they previously relied for subsistence rice and vegetables.

We therefore urge you to end all forced evictions as a matter of urgency and to introduce a moratorium on all mass evictions until legislative and policy measures are in place to ensure that evictions are only conducted when necessary and in full compliance with international human rights law and standards.

We urge you to immediately allow the evictees to return to their land and ensure access to emergency shelter pending the resolution of the land dispute in accordance with domestic law and international human rights law and standards.

We call on you to ensure access to effective remedies following the grave human rights violations that took place on 20th April 2007, including reparations and compensation for all property destroyed or damaged during the eviction.

We urge you to initiate an urgent impartial and independent inquiry into the violence of 20th April 2007, promptly make the findings public, and bring those responsible to justice.

With regards,

Signature

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