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Office of the President  
111/KKF/M/2008

No.

## **Appeal to European Parliament Sub Committee on Human Rights**

25 August 2008

On behalf of the Khmer-Krom refugees in Cambodia, we would like to bring to your attention regarding the human rights violations that have been committed by the Cambodian government toward the Khmer-Krom refugees in Cambodia.

On February 27, 2007, some Khmer-Krom Buddhist monks organized a peaceful demonstration in front of the Vietnamese Embassy in Phnom Penh to demand the Vietnamese government release their fellow Khmer-Krom Buddhist monks who were imprisoned in Vietnam after participating a peaceful demonstration to demand freely practice their Theravada Buddhism. After came back from the demonstration, **Venerable Eang Sok Thoeun**, 32 years old, was found with his throat slit at Tronom Chroeng pagoda, Boeng Thom commune, Ang Snuol district, Kandal province, under mysterious circumstances. His body was buried in haste in the middle of the night by the Cambodian polices. The police also forbade bringing his corpse for organizing a Cambodian traditional funeral ceremony.



On April 20, 2007, the Cambodia authority used a violent group of Cambodian monks who served for the Cambodia authority to beat up Khmer Krom monks conducting a peaceful demonstration in front of the Vietnamese Embassy. Venerable Lim Yuth, 23 years old, was injured when a rock was thrown by the opposing monk and hit his left eyebrow.



**On 30 June 2007**, Venerable Tim Sakhorn, Abbot of North Phnom-Denh temple in Phnom-Denh village, Karivong District, Takeo province, Cambodia, was summoned to meet the Head Monk of the Takeo province at Takeo City. After the meeting,



Venerable Tim Sakhorn

the Cambodia authority and the Head Monk accused Venerable Tim Sakhorn of using his temple as a place **“to propagate activities that divide the relationship between Cambodia and Vietnam”** as stated in the letter used to defrock Ven. Tim Sakhorn by Supreme Patriarch Tep Vong.

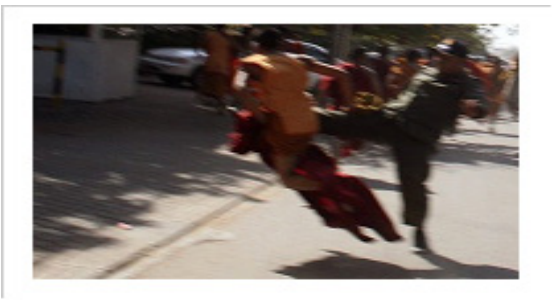
After being defrocked, Venerable Tim Sakhorn disappeared. The spokesmen of the Cambodian authorities were flip-flopping with the whereabouts of Venerable Tim Sakhorn. The spokesman of the Vietnamese Embassy in Phnom-Penh, Trinh Ba Cam, had previously denied any knowledge of Ven. Tim Sakhorn’s whereabouts after his disappearance from Cambodia.

What is more disturbing is the fact that the letter to defrock Venerable Tim Sakhorn was secretly approved on February 17, 2007 by Venerable Tep Vong who is the “King” of Cambodian Buddhist monks in Cambodia, but the people in Cambodia did not know about it until today. That approved letter was translated from Khmer to Vietnamese and the VC government distributed and posted the letter across all Khmer-Krom Buddhist temples in South Vietnam. It is a clear act of intimidation to suppress further human rights activities and movement by Khmer-Krom Buddhist monks who want to stand up for their religious rights.

Today, Tim Sakhorn remains in house detention in An Giang with under heavy surveillance, a condition which was not previous mentioned during the court hearing.

**On 17 December 2007**, approximately 50 Khmer-Krom Buddhist monks in Phnom Penh, Cambodia marched peacefully to Vietnamese Embassy to hand up a petition. The petition called to the VC government to release Venerable Tim Sakhorn and five other Khmer-Krom Buddhist monks currently imprisoned in Khleang province. The Vietnam Embassy refused to take the petition and ordered the Cambodian polices disperse the monks.

A fight broke out and electric batons were used by the Cambodian police against the defenceless monks. The monks tried to head back to their pagoda as fast as they could run. The police chased the monks for more than four blocks, some kicking the monks with their boots while others or shocking them with electric batons. Three monks were unconscious, namely, Venerable Ly Vanny, Venerable Meng Savan Dararithy and Venerable Lam Keo Samnang and fifteen others were wounded.



Cambodian police kidnap Buddhist monk (Phnom Penh, Cambodia, December 2007)	Cambodian police attempts to use an electric baton to hit a fleeing Buddhist monk (Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 17 December 2007)
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On behalf of the Khmer Krom refugees in Cambodia, I would like to appeal for your assistance to:

- Urge Cambodia government to recognize Khmer Krom as refugees when they arrived at Cambodia because they flee from Vietnam seeking for refugee status. If Cambodia tactically considers Khmer Krom refugees as Cambodia citizen, then the world will not know that Khmer Krom escaped Vietnam because of the human rights violations committed by Vietnamese government.
- Urge Cambodian government to negotiate with Vietnam for the release and return of Venerable Tim Sakhorn, who is a Cambodian Citizen to Cambodia.
- Ask the Cambodian government to implement initiatives, program to help refugees fleeing the border rather than just status recognition to ensure that these refugees are given immediate aid and protection rather than left to fend for themselves.
- Urge Cambodia government to conduct a thorough and independent investigation into the murder case of Ven. Eang Sok Thoeun and bring the killer to the court.
- Urge Cambodia government to respect the basic right to conduct peaceful demonstration of the Khmer Krom Buddhist monks who just demand to release their fellow Buddhist monks from prison in Vietnam.
- Urge the member countries of the European Parliament to provide support to Khmer Krom refugees who are living in difficult situation in Thailand. If possible, please help to grant refugee status to live in your country.