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RGC: Violence on July 15 Is Beyond Freedom of Speech

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) said the extreme violence, injuring 38 security guards of the local authorities, of whom 22 were seriously injured and 3 are in intensive care, on July 15, 2014 under the slogan “Free Democracy Park” led by several elected parliamentary candidates of the main opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) was beyond freedom of speech.

These were a savage violence and serious human rights violence, said the RGC in a statement released yesterday evening, stressing, “This violence went well beyond freedom of speech into violation of criminal law through commission of serious premeditated acts, including preparing cement-filled pipes and other objects to use as weapons with intent to murder security guards of the local authority.”

The RGC condemns the savage violence, which seriously violated the law and caused social unrest, and which was led, directed and instigated by several elected CNRP parliamentary candidates, it said.

The RGC considers the demonstration as an illegal and disorderly one, and appeals to the Cambodian compatriots to continue cooperating with the RGC to maintain safety, public order and security and dignity of the Cambodian nation, said the statement.

H.E. Keo Remy, Secretary of State at the Office of the Council of Ministers (OCM) and Acting Chairman of the OCM’s Press and Quick Reaction Unit, said the RGC

will take strong legal measures against any groups who caused chaos and instability in the country.

“The RGC stops floating along with this issue anymore,” he underlined at a press conference on Wednesday.

“The opposition party always says that the RGC is an authoritarian government, but please look at your [opposition party] acts, who conduct more than 800 protests a year? How the government is authoritarian when online publication and social network, mainly Facebook, are open for all?,” he added.

On the same day, H.E. Ang Vong Vathana, Minister of Justice, chaired a special meeting with 24 representatives of international organizations and foreign ambassadors accredited to Cambodia to explain the savage violence and the arrest of elected CNRP parliamentary candidates.

The July 15, 2014 demonstration at the Democracy Park (Freedom Park) was organized under political feature and incitement, he told the foreign guests.

Following the savage violence, the Cambodian authorities arrested five elected CNRP parliamentary candidates, including Ms. Mu Sochua, Mr. Ho Vann, Mr. Men Sothavrin, Mr. Keo Phearum, and Mr. Real Camerin; and a CNRP’s activist Mr. Oeur Narith. They were sent to the prison on charge of insurrection and incitement by the Phnom Penh Municipal Court.

EU Continues its Assistance to Cambodia

The European Union (EU) will continue to provide assistance to Cambodia and the Cambodian people even though the political crisis after the July's general election has yet to be solved, according to local media reports.

The commitment was made known by EU Ambassador to Cambodia H.E. Jean-François Cautain at the end of his inspection tour of the EU-funded projects in the northeastern province of Rattanakiri last week.

“We are aware of the political crisis in Cambodia, however we still keep our stance in providing assistance to Cambodia. The political crisis is Cambodia's internal issue,” underlined the EU diplomat, calling on the two political parties that won seats at the National Assembly to find an appropriate resolution as soon as possible.

According to the EU, Cambodia receives an annual assistance of 35 million euro from the EU to support a series of development projects in Cambodia, aiming particularly at alleviating poverty and fulfilling people's basic needs.

Some US\$150 Million Japanese Aid to Cambodia

Japanese government has provided some US\$150 million in aid through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to Cambodia to implement four development projects.

Agreements on the aid were signed here on Thursday by H.E. Aun Porn Moniroth, Minister of Finance and Economy and Mr. Hiroshi Izaki, Chief Representative of JICA Cambodia Office, in the presence of Permanent Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Keat Chhon.

The aid includes a grant of US\$8.5 million for the expansion of lower secondary schools in Phnom Penh, and a soft loan of US\$137.8 million for the expansion of electric power transmission and distribution system in Phnom Penh city, the improvement of National Road No. 5 (Prek Kdam-Thlea Ma'am section), and for the rehabilitation of irrigation and drainage system in the provinces of Kampong Speu, Takeo and Kandal (Southwest of Phnom Penh Capital), according to an announcement of the Ministry of Economy and Finance at the signing ceremony.

The amount of aid offered to Cambodia is in response to the pledge made by Japanese Foreign Minister H.E. Fumio Kishida during his recent visit to Cambodia.

The above-said projects are in response to the prior need in education field, energy, water resources and communication as stated in the National Strategic Development Plan 2014-2018 of the royal government, as well as contribute to the development goal of the royal government as stated in the third phase of the Rectangular Strategy.

