

The CAMBODIA DAILY

Volume 40 Issue 29

Monday, August 18, 2008

1,200 riel/30 cents

Lack of Accountability Resulted In Disenfranchisement of Voters

Responses given by the president and secretary-general of the National Election Committee in the article "NEC Rejects SRP Complaint on Election Fraud" (Aug 14, page 28), demonstrate the complete lack of accountability of the most senior members of the national institution charged with conducting free and fair elections in Cambodia. As a result of such lack of accountability, key international standards were not met and millions of voters were disenfranchised.

Letter to the Editor

The SRP has sound evidence that hundreds of thousands of forged 1018 forms were issued for the 2008 election. According to Article 53 of the amended Election Law, the NEC delegates the power to register voters to commune chiefs. CPP commune chiefs abused this power by issuing 1018 forms to people who were not eligible to vote. However, from a legal point of view, the NEC remains ultimately responsible for the fraud.

The NEC claims that falsified 1018 forms do not fall under its jurisdiction since "the forms are issued by commune councilors and not by election workers." But these falsified forms did have an impact on the election results. It is the duty of the NEC to ensure these results reflect a free and fair electoral process. Therefore the falsified forms most certainly fall under the NEC's jurisdiction and responsibility.

The election results should be recalculated to reflect the true will of the Cambodian people by considering the large-scale disenfranchisement of non-CPP voters and the use of fraudulent documents. The SRP continues to collect these forged forms daily while the NEC refuses to accept them as evidence of fraud. The NEC clearly fears legal consequences and the potential reversal of election results that would give the CPP fewer seats.

An analysis conducted with the help of independent experts found

that as few as five forged voter registration forms or five disenfranchised non-CPP voters per polling station deprived the opposition of one National Assembly seat. The SRP invites readers to examine this analysis at the SRP Web site, <http://tinyurl.com/63zuyr>.

The SRP agrees with the NEC secretary-general that the commune chiefs who forged documents must be brought to justice. However, the NEC delegated full power to these commune chiefs, well aware that they had been abusing this power since the 2007 Commune Election. Must the NEC not also be held responsible?

The SRP calls on the Constitutional Council to act independently and give justice to millions of voters whose constitutional rights were denied on July 27. The SRP urges governments of signatory nations of the Paris Peace Accords to fulfill their duties with vigilance and allow Cambodia to move forward as a democratic nation.

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