

SRP, HRP Take Election Grievances Overseas

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The SRP and the Human Rights Party have written to the leaders of 18 nations who signed the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement—which cleared the way for Cambodia's first democratically elected government—complaining of alleged irregularities in the July 27 election.

Signed by SRP President Sam Rainsy and HRP President Kem Sokha, the letters express the opposition parties' "wish to bring to [signatories'] attention the extent to which political developments in Cambodia have departed dangerously from the path laid out in the Paris Agreements."

According to a copy of the letter, the two parties reiterate their complaints of "systematic and massive electoral fraud."

They also accuse Prime Minister Hun Sen's ruling CPP and a CPP-controlled National Election Committee of deleting "hundreds of thousands" of pro-opposition voters from the election list.

The deception also involved the keeping of "hundreds of thousands of names of ghost voters in order to build up a reserve of fraudulent votes for the CPP," the letter states.

"This type of fake election is in violation of the Paris Agreements which call for Cambodia to provide for periodic and genuine elections'

as well as 'the right to vote and to be elected by universal and equal suffrage,'" it added.

Sam Rainsy said by telephone Thursday that the opposition has decided to write to the Paris Agreement signatories to "remind them to fulfill their obligations."

"We want them to not recognize the election result or congratulate the election result," Sam Rainsy said, adding that signatory countries must assist in finding a solution to the alleged election irregularities. The countries should also prevent the CPP from going through with a threat to divvy up the SRP and HRP's Assembly seats should the opposition boycott the first Assembly session.

CPP lawmaker Cheam Yeap said

by telephone Thursday that he was not surprised by the opposition's letter-writing campaign but also believed that it would do them little good because other countries, a number of whom monitored the election, are confident the poll went smoothly enough.

"This is a tantrum strategy.... [Sam Rainsy] always refuses to recognize the election result," Cheam Yeap said.

"[Signatory countries] are not blind and deaf; they'd be stupid to listen to the losers."

Nineteen foreign countries were party to the Paris Peace Conference, including most of Asean, the US, China, Japan, Britain, France, Australia and the now-defunct Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

HRP Appeal Requesting Revote Denied by Council

The Constitutional Council on Thursday dismissed the final complaint against the unofficial results of the July 27 national election, ruling against a Human Rights Party appeal requesting a nationwide revote. HRP Secretary-General Yem Ponhearith said that he was not surprised by the decision, chalking it up to the majority of the nine-person Council coming from Prime Minister Hun Sen's ruling CPP. The HRP had been claiming that the voter rolls contained a large number of duplicate names that could have allowed unregistered individuals to vote under assumed names. National Election Committee Secretary-General Tep Nytha said that the HRP complaint was the last one against the unofficial results. Once the Constitutional Council officially informs the NEC that all the complaints have been settled, the final election results will be announced, he said. Those results would likely be made public Saturday or at the latest Monday, Tep Nytha added. (Yun Samean)