

**NEWSLETTER****KAS****CAMBODIA OFFICE**37<sup>th</sup> EDITION

March 2012

Katharina Boheim

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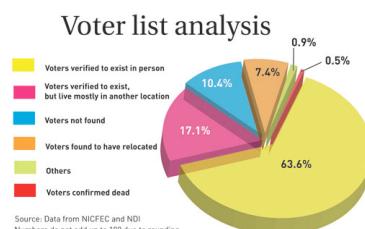
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## The following articles are a composition of last two weeks' (15.03.2013-31.03.2013) press releases in Cambodia. They give a review on current developments in the country.

### Report finds troubling data in voter rolls



Source: The Phnom Penh Post<sup>1</sup>

Voters who can't be found, deletions of names from lists and a decline in the accuracy of registry data are just a few of the many areas of concern that two NGO's brought to the attention of the National Election Committee (NEC) in a statistically scathing report released yesterday. Led by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), Cambodia's Center for Advanced Study, and the Neutral and Impartial Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (NICFEC), interviewers reached a broad sampling of about 5,000 eligible and registered voters spread out across 24 provinces. The results will prove disconcerting for believers in the fairness of the electoral process, and stir doubt in optimists who believe improvements have been made since the last national elections five years ago. NEC Secretary-General Tep Nytha called the audit suspect and requested NDI to give the names for three cases. First, those who have rights to vote and were deleted from voter list; second, those who were already registered but did not have a name in the voter list; and third, those who used to vote in 2008 and 2012, and now can't find their names on the voter list. The NEC attempted to throw doubt into the study's credibility by criticising its methodology. In a central allegation, the election committee claims that NDI figures contradict themselves. One figure puts the voter registration rate at around 83 percent, which would mean a decline from 2008. In another section of the audit, the election committee says, the figure stands at a total of 90 percent. But the NDI statement argues that "those two numbers cannot be logically combined or compared," because the first set of interviews asked eligible voters if they had registered, while the second sought to match names on the list with actual people. The institute also denied another claim that its field team had only conducted interviews by phone, and cited a confidentiality agreement in refusing to release interviewees' names.

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#### Further Reading:

##### **Troubling data in voter rolls: report**

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/2013032264628/National/troubling-data-in-voter-rolls-report.html>

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.phnompenhpost.com/images/stories/news/national/2013/130322/data\\_from\\_nicfec.jpg](http://www.phnompenhpost.com/images/stories/news/national/2013/130322/data_from_nicfec.jpg)



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**NDI defends audit of Cambodia's voter rolls**

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/2013032564663/National/ndi-defends-audit-of-kingdom-s-voter-rolls.html>

**Second dispute between US-funded broadcaster and government**



**Radio Free Asia**

After a report of Radio Free Asia (RFA), a US-funded broadcasting agency, aired an interview earlier this week with a former Khmer Rouge soldier in the border province of Battambang who said the Cambodian boundary had lost around 10 kilometers to Thailand in recent decades, a government spokesman on Thursday warned against potentially inciting reporting on land loss

along the Thai border, calling it a "national security" issue that could prompt legal action. Government spokesman Phay Siphan told reporters on Thursday the government would consider a lawsuit against RFA for its border reporting if it deemed the reports threatening to national security. In a statement on Friday, RFA defended the story, which said the government had ceded roughly 10 kilometres of territory on the Thai-Cambodian border. The statement says, that the reporting was accurate, objective and well-sourced. The Cambodian government's attack on RFA would be just the latest in a series of public and private threats that fit a distinct pattern – one meant to intimidate the reporters and to discourage objective reporting on issues sensitive to the government. Last year RFA, along with other foreign-funded stations, was called into a inter-ministerial meeting and berated by government officials for airing reports that appeared too pro-opposition and anti-government.

Further Reading:

**Government Threatens RFA With Potential Lawsuit Over Border Report**  
<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/govt-rfa-potential-lawsuit-over-border-report/1630607.html>

**RFA hits back at 'threats'**

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/2013040164812/National/rfa-hits-back-at-threats.html>

**Government tries to intimidate Radio Free Asia and Voice of America**  
<http://en.rsf.org/government-tries-to-intimidate-17-10-2012,43546.html>

**Cambodia denies "interfering" in Radio Free Asia**

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-10-11/an-cambodia-government-accused-of-threatening-radio-free-asia/4306786>

<sup>2</sup> [http://2.bp.blogspot.com/\\_eFGtrBi5YL8/TB-sePQMbLI/AAAAAAAAMFs/oWXNYTBrrGA/s1600/USA+RFA+Logo+\(color\).gif](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_eFGtrBi5YL8/TB-sePQMbLI/AAAAAAAAMFs/oWXNYTBrrGA/s1600/USA+RFA+Logo+(color).gif)

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Maximilian Jürgens[www.kas.de](http://www.kas.de)[www.kas.de/kambodscha](http://www.kas.de/kambodscha)**International Resolution on Sam Rainsy**Source: National Rescue Party<sup>3</sup>

A Committee on Human Rights of parliamentarians from 162 countries has proposed a draft resolution stating that the criminal convictions against Cambodian opposition party leader Sam Rainsy are politically motivated, and that his participation in July's national election is necessary if he vote is to be considered free and fair. Currently Sam Rainsy lives abroad, to avoid imprisonment for more than ten years on charges that are suspected to be politically motivated. He is the leader of the National Rescue Party, founded last year by

the Sam Rainsy Party and the Human Rights Party.

The resolution of the Inter-Parliamentary Union adds to growing international calls for election reforms ahead of the national parliamentary polls. The IPU said both the ruling party and opposition should "do everything possible to work together as a matter of urgency" in allowing Sam Rainsy's return. Although Cambodia's minister of justice met with the IPU's Secretary-General in February to explain the conviction of Sam Rainy and the verdicts, the minister's explanation was not sufficient, the resolution states. Prime Minister Hun Sen has said Sam Rainsy's case is a matter for the courts. Sam Rainsy referred to the courts as an excuse for Primeminister Hun Sen to block him in the upcoming elections.

Government spokesman Phay Siphan dismissed the resolution, claiming the IPU was attempting to interfere with Cambodia's sovereignty and rule of law. It would seem that Sam Rainsy wouldn't want the rule of law and democracy in Cambodia to move forward. Rainsy could show his good will by accepting the sentence. The proposed resolution was welcomed by the opposition party.

Further reading:**IPU Resolution on the case of Sam Rainsy**<http://www.nationalrescueparty.org/ipu-resolution-on-the-case-of-sam-rainsy/>**Parliamentary Group Backs Rainsy Return to Cambodia**<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/cambodia/rainsy-03282013185222.html>**International Parliamentarians Want Return of Sam Rainsy for Election**<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/international-parliament-wants-rainsy-return/1632356.html>**International Parliamentary Group Proposes Resolution on Rainsy**<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/international-parliamentary-group-proposes-resolution-on-rainsy-16583/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.nationalrescueparty.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/sam\\_rainsy\\_paris-612x375.jpg](http://www.nationalrescueparty.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/sam_rainsy_paris-612x375.jpg)

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[www.kas.de](http://www.kas.de)[www.kas.de/kambodscha](http://www.kas.de/kambodscha)**New Traffic Law almost finished**Source: The Phnom Penh Post<sup>4</sup>

Cambodian lawmakers have almost finished a draft for a new and much anticipated traffic law. The new law will raise existing fines for ignoring traffic rules and will forbid drunk driving.

The draft is said to be 90 per cent complete and will be sent to the National Assembly, soon. The lawmakers expect the new law to save hundreds of lives and reduce costs. On average, five people die every day from road safety accidents, and hundreds of millions are lost every year in associated crash costs. The Traffic Authority

recently detailed the main causes for accidents on the road. According to the department, 94 per cent of traffic accidents are caused by human error, such as going over the speed limit, drunk driving, carelessness and simply evading rights of way or traffic lights. The underlying issue however, is the thought here that drivers hold a distinct lack of morality and responsibility while behind the wheel. Traffic accidents are the second leading cause of death in the country, and in the wake of a slew of headline-making crashes, Prime Minister Hun Sen has called on government ministries to reduce the problem. This call came after a student killed three children and seriously injured six people in a hit-and-run crash in Phnom Penh. Minister of Information Khieu Kanharith said at a training that police and judges should take a tough stance on accidents that make their way to court, even if the victim has been compensated in an informal settlement.

Further Reading:**Traffic law almost at hand**<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/2013032864741/National/traffic-law-almost-at-hand.html>**Morality on the road is as important as a licence**<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/2013032764702/LIFT/morality-on-the-road-is-as-important-as-a-licence.html>**Hit-and-run kills 3**[http://www.phnompenhpost.com/2013030461729/National\(hit-and-run-kills-3.html](http://www.phnompenhpost.com/2013030461729/National(hit-and-run-kills-3.html)**Information Minister Says Hit-and-Run Drivers Must Face Justice**<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/information-minister-says-hit-and-run-drivers-must-face-justice-16472/>