

Ministry of Interior
Cabinet

REPORT
On Small Arms Control and Law enforcement

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1 - Lead - in

Kingdom of Cambodia, one of the small and not well-to-do countries, with an area of 181.035 sq. km and the population of about 11 millions inhabitants suffered from civil wars of nearly 3 decades. As a matter of fact, Cambodia is not a producer of weapons and ammunitions. However, during the warring time manifold small arms and light weapons manufactured in a number of manufacturers such as France, the United States of America, the ex-Soviet Union, China, Cuba, ex-Tchecoslovakia and the like were imported into Cambodia.

At the moment, the wars have come to a complete end, but many kinds of weapons and ammunitions which remain scattered even on or under the surface of the country are of course a serious obstacle to the social development and the strengthening of democracy as well as human rights in Cambodia. Subsequently, the Royal Government of Cambodia, taking into account of the concern of the Cambodian people and that of the humanity vis-a-vis the ugly effect of the weapons, decided that the effective control of weapons and explosives is one of the items in the reforms policy, politics, public administration, justice and armed forces.

2 - Small Arms Control

In the aftermath of the wars, the security and public order have not fully been guaranteed. Therefore, a number of people are still in need of small arms and ammunitions to self-defense, to protect their belongings and their interests. We have made a concerted effort to find out the small arms being kept and anarchically used by implementing the following approaches:

-Staging campaigns among the grass-roots so that they agree to voluntarily hand the weapons in their possessive over to the authorities,

-Deploying aggregate forces in streets and roads to scrupulously check and search for weapons in accordance with administrative measures,

-Issuing a decision to deem weapons possessing license which was previously delivered null and void,

-Issuing a decision to establish an Arm Confiscating Commission,

-Minimizing arms utilization. We have made amendment to the existing sub-decree and the interior-defense interministerial announcement. Such move urges armed organizations and authorities of all levels to enhance their responsibility for a tight control on the arms confiscation. As a result, hundreds of thousands of pistols, guns, bazookas, grenades, etc. were gathered from the following cases:

- . anarchic use
- . private use to defense properties
- . rent to private companies
- . possession for personal safety
- . lent by relatives and the like,

-Meanwhile, we have reduced self-defense forces in terms of quantity of personnel and weapons. Then we collected 15.000 pieces of weapons.

3 - Destruction of Weapons

So far, we have collected 107,869 pieces of weapons (including the 15.000 pieces confiscated from the self-defense forces). Thenceforth, we organized 7 times of weapons destruction in which 36.505 pieces collected from 13 provinces and cities were broken down. It is estimated that we collected up to 40% of the weapons scattered throughout the country.

4 - Law Enforcement

In addition to the above-mentioned approaches, the Royal Government of Cambodia established a National Commission for the Reform of Weapons and Explosives Control on 21 June 2000. Besides; we organized a national

seminar on weapons and explosives control in Cambodia in order to discuss and find out the ways how to cope with the matter; we made our own draft law to synchronize with the one made by EUASAC; the Royal Government of Cambodia requested on 23 November 2000 H.E Kofi A. Annan, Honorable Secretary General of the United Nations, for the assistances in the implementation of a pilot project - weapons in the exchange for development and as a result the latter agreed that he would send a team of disarmament experts headed by H.E Jayantha AHANAPALA UN Under Secretary General for Disarmament to Cambodia to look into the facts and figures of weapons situation. In this connection the international communities have pledged to provide the assistance and strong support for the government's policy, say:

4.1 - The European Union Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia (EUASAC)

This organization arrived in Cambodia since March 2000. So far, it made a complete survey to concretize the 2001 project with a budget of around 1.3 million EUROS, which focused on:

- Building up of the laws on weapons, parallel with the sponsorship for a round table meeting with the Cambodian side to finalize the draft law, and to send an expert on international laws to Cambodia. At the moment, we have two separate draft laws on the same topic - one drafted by EU and the other by the Interior Ministry's specialized department.
- Setting up of the weapons warehouse of the Ministry of National Defense with a computerizing registration system situated in Kompong Cham's 2nd Military Region with a budget of about 300.000 US dollars.
- The scheme of the exchange of weapons for the community development. Such a scheme will be implemented in 2 regions—one in Snuol district, Kratie province and the other in Bakan district, Pursat province.
- The assistance in 10 schedules of weapons destruction (including the weapons previously collected and those collected via the development scheme).

4.2 - Working Group for Weapons Disarmament in Cambodia

This working group funded by the Japanese Government, the Netherlands and a number of non-governmental organizations started operation since 1998 and managed:

- To conduct propaganda campaigns among the populace through various meetings; the publication of leaflets, slogans, pictures and caricatures and magazines to show up the harmful and abominable effect of weapons,
- To take note of the people's request,
- To watch out for the operation of the weapons being collected, confiscated and destroyed by the government, and
- To convene civilian communities, national and international organizations as well as lawyers to share the viewpoints on the bills drafted by EU and the Interior Ministry's specialized department.

4.3 - Japan

Following the agreement between Samdech Hun Sen, Cambodia's Prime Minister and H.E Kaizo Obochi, Japan's Prime Minister during the latter's visit to Kingdom of Cambodia, Japan has sent a number of delegations to Cambodia to discuss the weapons issue with the Interior Ministry representatives and officers concerned. So far, Japan has pledged to send its experts to Cambodia and provide technical assistance for weapons control.

However, Japanese organizations have funded the working groups for weapons reduction in Cambodia and pledged to partially fund EUASAC for "the weapons in exchange for development" scheme.

4.4 - The United Nations Organization

In accordance with the request of the Royal Government of Cambodia dated 23 November, 2000, the UN have recently sent a 4-member team to Cambodia in order to:

- Observe the operation of the collection and confiscation of weapons in Cambodia,

- Make a comprehensive survey of EUASAC's project,
- Be aware of the relationship between EUASAC and The Royal Government of Cambodia, and
- Survey the role played by the UN in Cambodia regarding the collection, confiscation and destruction of weapons.

Besides the assistance in law enforcement provided by the above countries and organizations, we must not forget Canada, which is the co-Sponsor of this Seminar on Conventional Weapons Transfers.

The lessons and experiences of developed countries where the majority of violence happens because of weapons show that wherever filled with weapons anarchically used, it is dangerous, especially it is more dangerous for Cambodia because the social morality and decency have been lowered since the inception of the 1970s war and the Cambodian society has been saturated with weapons. This is why we have to take most attention to collect and destroy the weapons.

As far as the small arms and light weapons issues become more concerned, I am certain to say that the disarmament can not be successfully conducted unless there is a close and broad cooperation between the sources of all levels: national, regional, international as well as the populace, communities, NGOs and world organizations.

We also reckon that the disarmament must not be conducted per se, but parallel to the strengthening of security and public order as well as the rural development. Accordingly, we feel sure that the assistance of training of police professionalism and the promotion of people's standard of living are a cornerstone for peace and prosperity.

Thanks