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THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND ITS
APPLICATION TO PEOPLES UNDER COLONIAL OR ALIEN
DOMINATION OR FOREIGN OCCUPATION

Letter dated 7 February 1983 from the Permanent Representative
of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam addressed to the Chairman
of the Commission on Human Rights

"The resurrection of Kampuchea 1979-1982"

I should be grateful if you would have this text circulated as an official document of the thirty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights under item 9 of the agenda.

(Sign. d) Nguyen Thuong
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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THE RESURRECTION OF KAMPUCHEA

1979-1982

7 January 1979 marked a glorious turning-point in the history of Kampuchea. Facing genocide and the loss of their country, the Kampuchean people rose and overthrew the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary-Khieu Samphan clique, agents of the Beijing expansionists. This victory turned over a new leaf in the history of Kampuchea, ushering in an era in which its people would enjoy freedom and independence and be the master of their own destiny.

While men of conscience throughout the world were elated at the news, their hearts were filled with anguish when they thought of the trials facing the four million Kampuchean survivors: hunger, disease, terrible destruction; for as President Heng Samrin said, "not only did the Pol Pot clique push Kampuchea back several decades in the economic and cultural fields, the material and spiritual sequels of their rule are to be suffered by many future generations of Kampucheans". Would the people of Kampuchea be able to stand on their feet and build a new life for themselves?

And yet, within the short space of a little more than three years - a very short period indeed - the Kampuchean people, thanks to their tremendous vitality and the wholehearted assistance of brothers and friends throughout the world, have shown speedy and miraculous revival and recorded remarkable achievements in all fields.

Many difficulties and obstacles remain for they face the double task of frustrating the enemy's attempts at sabotage and destruction while striving to meet the requirements of daily life and rebuild the country. But it is certain that, having successfully overcome seemingly insuperable difficulties, the Kampuchean people, by relying on both their own resolve and international support and assistance, will advance with steady steps toward a bright future.

A little more than two years after the complete liberation of their country, the people of Kampuchea enthusiastically carried out the general elections of 1 May 1981, in which representatives worthy of their trust and devoted to the cause of national defence and reconstruction were elected to the National Assembly.

97.82 per cent of the electorate went to the polls and cast their votes according to the principle of secret suffrage. Of the 148 candidates in 20 provinces, 117 were elected, comprising 96 men and 21 women representing all social strata, nationalities and religious beliefs, and active in all fields - politics, economics, science and technology, culture and society, the arts, the armed forces, the mass organizations, etc.

Then, on 27 June 1981, Heng Samrin, the President of the State Council elected by the National Assembly, signed a decree promulgating the first democratic Constitution of Kampuchea, following discussion by the entire people of the draft. The Preamble of the Constitution emphasizes: "The Constitution of the People's Republic of Kampuchea is the result of a long process of struggle of our people, full of difficulties and hardships. It reflects the will and goal of our entire people: to resolutely defend our independence, rebuild our country and steadily advance on the road to socialism".

In Part 2, Chapter 1, the Constitution states that the name of our country is "People's Republic of Kampuchea" and that the Kampuchean people is "the master of the destiny of its country. All powers belong to the people".

In the light of the Constitution, the legislative, executive and judiciary organs set up in the whole country at all echelons following the victory of 7 January 1979, have been consolidated and perfected. The Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, the only authentic and legitimate representative of the Kampuchean people, is managing all the country's affairs, both internal and external.

Ever since liberation, the Kampuchean people have striven to step up production, rehabilitate and develop the economy and culture, rebuild the country, stabilize and gradually improve living standards, and have recorded important achievements in all fields.

Agriculture: The people have set to work with enthusiasm and received guidance from the Government. They have been organized into "solidarity and production teams". Within a short time, between 1979 and 1980, 95,000 such teams were set up, including 90 per cent of the total number of peasant households in the country.

Overcoming great difficulties stemming from shortages of seeds, farming implements, draught animals, irrigation facilities, etc. the people throughout the country have made tremendous efforts to check the serious threat of famine. From 800,000 hectares under rice and subsidiary food crops in 1979, the cultivated area grew to 1,500,000 hectares in 1980, yielding 1,500,000 metric tons of paddy. The year 1980 witnessed the largest bumper crop in the past ten years. In 1981, in spite of natural calamities, the cultivated area remained as much as 1,470,000 hectares, and total yields were 1,600,000 tons. In the first half of 1982, the dry rice crop won all-round success: total cultivated area was over 150,000 hectares (1.5 times the figure for 1981) and total yields were 256,000 tons (twice the 1981 figure).

Industrial crops: Plantations have been restored and enlarged: rubber, tobacco, soybean, emphasis being laid on rubber. In 1980, the area under rubber was 5,000 hectares; in 1981, 8,700 hectares, yielding 5,000 tons of raw latex; in early 1982, 11,724 hectares, yielding 3,200 tons of dried latex. The area under shortgrowth industrial crops went up from 13,500 hectares in 1980 to 24,700 hectares in 1981.

Animal husbandry: Whereas the total herd of oxen and buffaloes had been 3 million before 1970, there remained only 700,000 head in early 1979.

- 1979-1980: 1 million buffaloes and oxen; over 100,000 pigs each year.
- 1981: the cattle herd increased by 15 per cent; the pig herd totalled nearly 200,000.
- First half of 1982: the number of buffaloes increased by 1.2 per cent; that of oxen by 3.8 per cent; that of pigs had doubled compared with the same period in 1981.

Water conservation and control: Before fleeing, the Pol Pot clique had destroyed many major irrigation works. Since 1979, the people have restored thousands of kilometres of channels, hundreds of dams and reservoirs. In 1980-1981, they restored and improved 14 major works in such provinces as Battambang, Kompong Thom, Siem Reap, Kandal, Ta Keo, Kompong Speu. Sixty works of various sizes in the Preah Vihear (Kompong Speu) region have been repaired or built. The irrigation-and-drainage system at Preaekanh Chanit in Kompong Thom, which covers more than 25,000 hectares, is among the largest water-conservation systems in the country to be improved. Besides, 30 water-conservation works ensure irrigation and drainage for 30,000 hectares in Battambang, and the Preaek Rum Del project in Prey Veng helps combat water-logging for 2,500 hectares of rice-land.

Fisheries: Total catch for 1979-1980: more than 20,000 tons;

For 1980-1981: 50,000 tons;

For 1981-1982: 72,000 tons.

The highest annual figures in the days of Pol Pot rule were 25,000-30,000 tons.

Industry: Destruction by the Pol Pot clique affected almost all industrial branches: almost all the factories were closed, their machines and equipment wrecked, and more than 80 per cent of the engineers, skilled workers and technicians massacred.

In 1979, 40 undertakings were restored and began working again.

By 1980, 60 undertakings were operating, among them nine light-industry enterprises, two building-materials plants, and three power plants with an aggregate capacity of 104 million kw/h.

Small industry and handicrafts: Under the Pol Pot regime almost all handicrafts were abolished. At present they are being restored with Government assistance, and more shops have been set up producing farming implements, basketwork, ceramics, rush mats, sugar, etc. In Phnom Penh alone 722 shops were operating in 1980, giving employment to 2,930 craftsmen. By 1981, these figures had increased to 1,338 shops and 3,850 craftsmen. At present there are in Kampuchea 1,500 shops with more than 5,000 craftsmen.

Communications and postal service: The road, railway and waterway network has been restored. The major communication lines are operating; the Kompong Som-Phnom Penh railway line has been linked to Battambang. Air transport between Phnom Penh and Hanoi, and between Phnom Penh and Vientiane functions on a regular basis. Major highways have been improved and new bridges built. Postal service between the capital and the provinces has been restored. The telephone system is functioning again, and so is the international cable service.

Money and trade: Pol Pot had abolished the money system. Following liberation, in March 1980, the national currency, the riel, was again in use. A State trade service has been established throughout the country while private trade continues to play an important role.

Culture and art: Of the former 1,240 artists in pre-Pol Pot days, only 120 survived Pol Pot's genocide. The new culture with a national character has quickly penetrated into the masses since liberation. Great attention has been paid to the preservation of historical relics and artistic works. Information work, the press and radio, publishing, and mass cultural activities have been promoted. The National Art Ensemble of Kampuchea has performed in a number of fraternal countries where it has been given warm applause. The young revolutionary cinema has produced films with a wholesome content, such as *Kampuchea: Three plus Four* (1980) and *What's Your Name, My Child?* (1981) which have been awarded prizes at film festivals in the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic.

Education: The Pol Pot clique massacred 80 per cent of the teachers. They turned school buildings into prisons and barracks. Following liberation, work started immediately for the restoration of schools and training of teachers. When the school-year 1979-1980 began, there were already 4,971 general education schools comprising 17,761 classes with a total enrolment of 947,300 pupils and 21,600 teachers; by 1980-1981, the number of pupils had increased to 1.3 million; and when the school year 1981-1982 started, total student enrolment was 1.5 million and total teaching staff 38,600 (a 24.5 per cent increase compared with 1980-1981). Total student enrolment is 2,100 for the Teachers' Training College, the College of Medicine and Pharmacy, and the Technical College: it is 1.033 for the secondary vocational schools (technology, foreign languages, medicine, art, trades and crafts); 33,000 teachers have been trained for the various levels of education; 176,363 people have followed evening classes for adults in the first half of 1982; the three Rs have been taught to 143,600 people in 1981 and 220,000 more in the first half of 1982. Infant schools number 269 with an enrolment of 17,336, an increase of 90 per cent compared with 1981.

Health care and social affairs: Of the 683 medical doctors, pharmacists and assistants of pre-1975 days, only 69 survived Pol Pot's genocide (54 doctors out of 462; 15 pharmacists out of 156). Since liberation many health-care establishments have been expanded and re-equipped. By 1981 the number of health-care cadres in the whole country had grown to 10,000, among them 160 doctors and pharmacists; there are now 25 hospitals, 8 of them in Pnom Penh. There are health stations and maternity homes in 90 per cent of the communes.

In Kampuchea, hospital care is given free of charge. Ailments which were endemic under the former regimes - dropsy, dysentery, malaria, pulmonary tuberculosis - have been actively treated and the morbidity rate has dropped visibly over the past three years. Care is given to 6,378 orphans in 40 centres: they are fed and receive general as well as vocational education, 194,000 others are looked after by individual families.

Religion: Buddhism, Catholicism, and Islam were banned under the Pol Pot regime. Forced labour was imposed on 82,000 monks, most of whom were later physically liquidated. Muslims in particular were exterminated almost in totality. The pagodas, numbering about 3,500, were either destroyed or turned into prisons, ammunition dumps, cattle sheds. They have now been restored, and 2,000 monks have been re-ordained under the new regime.

International solidarity: Since 1979 many treaties and protocols of friendship and economic and cultural co-operation have been signed by Kampuchea with Viet Nam, Laos, the Soviet Union and other fraternal socialist countries, and have been effectively implemented. Relations have been expanded between Kampuchea and other friendly countries and national liberation movements. The Kampuchean people's just struggle has received unflinching support from world public opinion. The prestige and international position of the People's Republic of Kampuchea have been unceasingly heightened. It has so far been recognized by more than 30 countries and two national liberation movements. Mass organizations in many countries have called on their governments to grant it recognition. Many delegations of the People's Republic of Kampuchea have visited fraternal and friendly countries and attended international conferences, and have been warmly welcomed. Hundreds of foreign delegations comprising thousands of members have visited the land of Angkor and hailed the miraculous revival of the Kampuchean nation.

SOME TESTIMONY

"In January, tens of newspapermen among whom were several special correspondents of the Western press could travel over the highways running from the east to the west of the country, around the Tonle Sap Lake ...

"At the end of this journey of about 1,000 kilometres made without escort, in the company of only one driver and one Khmer guide, the impression was that the relative stabilization, normalization of the situation had been achieved, at least in the whole central part of the country.

"In the visited regions, the most positive point is undoubtedly the stabilization of the population. While only a few months ago the roads were still full of persons deported by the Khmer Rouge regime who were returning to their native places, the population now has fixed residence and no more migrants are seen. On both sides of the two highways around the Tonle Sap Lake, newly-built thatched houses on stilts testify to the renewal of villages banned by the overthrown regime. Among banana and sugar-palm groves, small gardens are multiplying, planted with cassava, maize, sweet potato, tobacco ...

"Stabilization, normalization, renewal, this appears to be certain on the greater part of Kampuchean territory."

J.P. Gallois, "Voyage à travers
le Cambodge".
AFP, 16 January 1980.

"Other steps toward normalizing Cambodia are being taken as well. All that was banned under Pol Pot is being restored. The return of saffron-robed monks and the gradual repair of monasteries and pagodas have led to a revival of Buddhism. Although about half of the country's experienced teachers had perished, schools have reopened. Markets have sprouted near most towns".

Jim Laurie, "Cambodia - Back from the
Prink".
Los Angeles Times,
16 March 1980.

"Journalists who have visited Cambodia in recent weeks also have been impressed. Cambodia, they feel, is coming back to life under the Heng Samrin Government".

William Shawcross, "Food Aid, Tale of
Deceit Obstruction".
Washington Post, 18 March 1980.

"Tourists in Phnom Penh are amazed when seeing that the streets of the capital are full of beaming faces and happy smiles in spite of all the trials and tragedies of the past decade."

John Burgess, "Kampuchea - One Year
After".
The Boston Globe, 12 November 1980.

"Buddhism is again practised on the whole territory. Pagodas are being repaired which were formerly used as storehouses or closed down ... and the bonzes have recovered their identities and regained the believers' respect".

Vicente Romero, "Camboya: Despues de
la Barbario".
La Calle, March 1980.

"Three million people! Yes, three million people killed, out of a total population of seven million. Such was the sad legacy left by the bloodthirsty Pol Pot. Nearly half the population of Kampuchea was exterminated in the name of independence, of which nothing can so far justify the blind efficiency and insane destructiveness. At present, in this country which is returning from the hellish realm of death, survivors of the genocide are slowly raising their heads. They look beyond this stretch of land covered with mass graves. They try to come back to life. Father Buanic recounts: 'It has been a miraculous revival. At the time of my first trip to Kampuchea in July 1979, Phnom Penh was empty. Not a cat, not a soul. The streets were deserted and littered with pieces of furniture; the houses were a shambles: there was neither water nor electricity. Six months later, at Christmas 1979, everything had changed. Many people had come back to the city to live. There were some bicycles in the streets. By June 1980, life had come back to Phnom Penh. In the month of August 1981, the market in Phnom Penh was an even more crowded place than its counterpart in Ho Chi Minh City. Many new-borns have come into the world; children roam the streets'."

"Revival in Phnom Penh", by
Christian Scasso.
Afrique-Asie, 23 January 1981.

"Phnom Penh itself, which was deserted over a year ago, is coming back to life at a rate which surprises the most optimistic observers. The market is piled high with vegetables brought by peasants of the surrounding countryside ... Again smiles reappear on the lips of a people who have forgotten how to smile."

Chris Mullin, "Famine Stalks Kampuchea
Recovery".
Times, 21-27 May 1980.

"Kampuchea is changing with every passing day. Now, one year after, the wind of death has left town and countryside. Now is life in family affection, happiness of reunion, hands clasped in hands. The Kampuchean have regained their optimism and vivacity."

Ogura Sadao, Yomiuri, 16 June 1980.

"Kampuchea is rising from the ruins left by the Pol Pot regime. Social activities are progressing in the national orbit: such is the impression of press correspondents who have returned to Kampuchea 13 months after their first trip there in May last year ...".

Ikawa Dasuhara, Asahi, 16 June 1980.

"You're struck by the changes right upon your arrival. Relative quietude takes the place of the anguish of last year.

"Miracle!" people say. The miracle is not in the streets, where houses still bear traces of past plunder and where refuse still litters many pavements. It is in the eyes of children, where curiosity has replaced hunger; in the women's multicoloured sampots and their graceful nonchalance. It is in life which has regained its rights.

"Normalization in all fields: schools, factories, hospitals, towns, countryside. Normalization which has been no doubt difficult but which slowly progresses with the elimination of famine, the regression of the mortality rate, and some stabilization.

"An amazing rebirth after the physical and moral crushing of the dark years".

Francoise Corrèze, "Un an après,
Kampuchéa 1981.
Témoignages".

"Today Phnom Penh sparkles with the life of a city reborn from the ashes of Pol Pot's era. Schools, hospitals, and factories have reopened, the population has mushroomed to over half a million, and the municipal Government provides free water, electricity and housing. Now people can post letters again, spend money; it was abolished under Pol Pot's power. The new currency has been readily accepted by the many free-market traders and people can travel around the country by bus or by train ...

"Heng Samrin's Government is gradually winning the hearts and minds of people.

"... In the eyes of most Cambodians both inside their country and also those in Thai refugee camps, support for the Pol Pot regime at the United Nations is so outrageous that they find difficulty in believing it. They wonder whether the outside world really understands anything at all about the unmitigated evil of extermination camps like Toul Sleng. Many Khmers lamented: 'We would have welcomed anyone to come and liberate us but only Viet Nam came ..."

Tom Fanthrop, The Irish Times,
3-5 February 1981.

"... In 1980 the regime restored the use of currency and postal, telephone and telegraphic services. Government officials started to get paid in riels, the currency, instead of rice.

"The reopening of the national theatre, with its traditional dances, brought tears to the eyes of many in the audiences. Courting, which had been discouraged under the Khmer Rouge, is back in style. Near the former Royal Palace, facing the Tonle Sap River, couples stroll past small stands, where the vendors sell eggs, dried fish, and sugar-cane juice.

"Then here is the baby boom. Phnom Penh is full of one- and two-year-old children. For some of the older children, life in the city has meant discovering toys for the first time ...".

Daniel Southorland, staff correspondent
of the Christian Science Monitor,
3 February 1982.

"... Education, with a definite political tinge, is becoming institutionalized once more in Kampuchea (Cambodia).

"When the Khmer Rouge came to power in April 1975, leader Pol Pot closed the schoolroom door at one fell swoop to express his contempt for formal education. Schoolhouses were turned into piggeries or communal kitchens. One high school in Phnom Penh became the infamous Toul Sleng prison and torture chamber, where 16,000 top-ranking cadres and intellectuals were killed.

"... The Government has issued itself an impressive report card. In the first half of last year, 221 kindergartens opened and 411,250 adults were taught to read. Kampong Cham, one of the most populous rural provinces, now boasts 212 times as many teachers as it had before 1975."