



Interfaith International

Non-Governmental Organization with special consultative status with ECOSOC

13th session of Human Rights Council (1-26 March 2010)

UPR : Cambodia

Intervention by Maggie Murphy

Interfaith International and partners welcome the efforts made by Cambodia to update their reports to different Treaty bodies and we encourage the government to abide by their commitments made during the last session of CERD to systematically eliminate discrimination against indigenous groups and minorities. *We commend their acceptance of the majority of the recommendations made during the UPR process.*

We urge Cambodia to ensure that international standards related to asylum procedure are adhered to, and that the process of accepting or returning asylum seekers is not politicised under the influence of the individuals' countries of origin.

The forceful repatriation of Khmer Krom from Cambodia to Vietnam is an urgent concern which needs immediate attention since they face arbitrary arrest, ^{AND} detention ^{AND} torture upon return.

Furthermore, although the Cambodian government has clearly stated that Khmer Krom indigenous peoples who flee to Cambodia from Vietnam are entitled to Cambodian citizenship, the reality is very different. The Khmer Krom upon arrival are treated neither as citizens nor as refugees, rarely granted identity papers, forced to change their names and asked to provide impossible documentation such as Cambodian birth certificates. This dire situation is compounded by widespread corruption. Without identity papers, Khmer Krom are in legal limbo, denied the right to vote, prevented from seeking employment and are unable to occupy property or own land.

In addition, we are extremely concerned about the December 2009 deportation of 20 Uyghur asylum seekers to China, which was carried out at gun point. This is despite Cambodia's signature to the 1951 Convention on Refugees. The Uyghurs, who had been registered by the UNHCR as "persons of concern" were hastily removed just two days after changes were made to a sub-decree on refugee procedure. ~~The circumstances were highly politicised since the following day the Chinese Vice-President made an official visit to Cambodia.~~ As was forewarned by the international community, the location and wellbeing of the 20 Uyghurs remains unknown.

Thank you Chairman.

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