

Also on the positive side, the Cambodian government continued its good working relationship with the **Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General, Thomas Hammarberg**. Human rights education efforts continued and limited progress was made in establishing a functioning system of justice. The outcome of wrangling over the possibility of a trial involving Khmer Rouge leaders Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea will shed light on the direction the Cambodian government plans to take in overhauling its legal system.

Protection for the rights of women, children, minority groups and disabled persons continues to be weak. Domestic violence against women and children is common, the ethnic Vietnamese minority faces widespread social discrimination and some violence at the hands of the Khmer Rouge (fuelled in part by anti-Vietnamese slogans chanted during post-election demonstrations), and disabled persons also face societal discrimination. The government does not adequately enforce existing legal prohibitions against anti-union discrimination, nor provisions outlawing forced labour.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada, like most of the world's countries, supported the holding of elections in July 1998 and believes that the elections were reasonably fair and honest. Since mid-1994, Canada has supported good governance initiatives, some in cooperation with the National Assembly, and election preparations. It twice sponsored visits to Canada by Kem Sokha, Chairman of the National Assembly's Human Rights Committee. Canada has continued to call on the parties to put an end to all the violence since the crisis of July 5-6, 1997, and did the same during the period of social instability that followed the July 1998 vote. Through its ambassador in Phnom Penh, Canada has constantly demanded that the Cambodian government punish those found guilty of criminal acts. Canada provided technical advice on preparations for the 1998 national elections and sent short- and long-term election observers.

Australia tabled resolutions on the human rights situation in Cambodia at the 54th session of the **Commission on Human Rights in April 1998** and at the **53rd session of the 3rd Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in November 1998**. The Australian resolutions, co-sponsored by Canada, were adopted by consensus.

Canada, through its ambassador in Phnom Penh, has contacted Cambodian authorities in order to share its concerns and preferences regarding the treatment of Khmer Rouge leaders Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea. We are now waiting for the report from Sir Ninian Stephen, Special UN Representative to Cambodia, who was given a mandate by the General Assembly to review the options (national or international panel of judges) for trying these Khmer Rouge leaders. His report should be released to the public in mid-March 1999.