

(b) The Commission had no authority to supervise the elections as a whole.

(c) But the Commission could not remain indifferent to the implementation of the Cambodian undertaking regarding free elections. A watching brief was necessary to discharge its responsibilities towards the former members of the Khmer Resistance Forces under Article 6 of the Geneva Agreement.

(d) These responsibilities of the Commission might be defined as follows:

(i) It had to examine the Electoral Laws to make sure that they do safeguard secrecy of ballot.

(ii) It had to study the application of the laws of the country in regard to democratic freedoms so as to understand the scope of Article 6.

(iii) It had to satisfy itself that there was no discrimination against the former members of the Khmer Resistance Forces. It followed from this obligation regarding non-discrimination that the Commission had to keep itself informed of the conduct of the electoral campaign, the nature of the electoral practices in the country, the liberties enjoyed by the participating citizens, etc., in order to assess the rights of the former members of the Khmer Resistance Forces towards whom it had a special responsibility.

17. All the practical steps that the Commission took in the electoral period were in accordance with the guiding principles enumerated above. Our main object was to secure basic information regarding the conduct of the elections. Our approach can be shortly described as one of general observation and not of supervision.

18. The role of the Commission in the elections came up for discussion with the Royal Government whose view was that the elections were an internal matter. We explained our stand as stated above. We impressed on the Prime Minister (who was also Minister for Foreign Affairs) that we had no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of Cambodia and that if we discussed certain electoral issues with him, it was in order to assist the Royal Government in its task of implementing its undertakings given at Geneva. The Prime Minister was satisfied with the exposition of our position and throughout the electoral period we had friendly relations with the Government. On the other hand, there was misunderstanding of our position among the parties. The opposition parties assumed that we had wide powers of supervision and besought us to intervene. The press of the Popular Socialist Community insinuated that we were exceeding our powers and interfering in the internal affairs of Cambodia. The Royal Government, however, stated in a communique that the Commission was adopting a correct attitude to the elections.