

matter is still (30th September, 1955) pending with the Government. The Prime Minister informed us, however, three days before the elections that three candidates had been released.

31. During the period in which the Commission has been concerned with the elections, we have received about 100 petitions alleging that electoral abuses have taken place. These petitions were received by the Commission through the mails or handed in by visitors to our teams or central headquarters; some were from candidates, some from officials of the Democratic and Pracheachun parties, and some from individuals.

(a) These approximately 100 petitions involve some overlapping and the majority did not come from or relate to former members of the Khmer Resistance Forces. A few of these petitions were in general terms, alleging that the elections were not free and fair, but most made charges against certain local officials and against individuals and groups supporting the Popular Socialist Community. A certain number of persons claiming to be former members of the Khmer Resistance Forces stated that they and officials of the Pracheachun and Democratic parties were threatened with arrests and harassed by the Mekhums (village chiefs) by being summoned for interrogation or shadowed by the police, and in a few cases that criminal charges were made against them. The petitioners claimed that they were engaged only in legitimate electioneering activities. A few petitions alleged that the Mekhums threatened that if they did not vote for the Sangkum, they would be treated as traitors, or that the Mekhums tried to frighten them by firing shots in the air. Some members of the Pracheachun party complained that certain Mekhums withheld voting papers from opposition parties. There were a few complaints that Pracheachun and Democratic party electoral activity was hampered by the seizure of bundles of their newspapers and leaflets, by threats to those who read opposition newspapers, and by destruction of opposition party banners.

(b) Thirteen petitions were received making charges of the Government's para-military forces ("Les Forces Vives") exercising pressure in the villages to vote for the Sangkum threatening those who supported the other parties, and preventing people from attending meetings.

(c) The headquarters of one of the parties sent the Commission copies of circular letters allegedly issued by officials of a central Ministry asking local officials to make discreet propaganda for the Sangkum. We took this complaint up with the Prime Minister, who, after investigation, stated that these circular letters were sent out by an over-zealous official of one Ministry, acting in his personal capacity. Under Cambodian law civil servants are allowed to participate in politics outside office hours. We know of two instances where high-ranking officials known for their sympathy with the Democratic party were