

1. Issues

As set out in the November 1997 UNGA resolution on the Cambodian human rights situation, the major human rights issues in the country relate to the electoral process, the legal system and impunity, and freedom of the media. But there are other worrying issues as well, such as trafficking in children and treatment of prisoners.

While most of the other sections of this report deal with one or more aspects of human rights questions, this section will focus on describing the institutions dealing with human rights as such, and some of the human rights issues not described elsewhere, including humanitarian demining (ie, support to the right of security of the person).

2. Support for Human Rights

a) Cambodian Government

The government has said that it wishes to establish a **national human rights commission**. The UNGA resolution notes the intention of the Cambodian government to establish such a body and encourages it to seek assistance from the UNCHR. It is possible that enabling legislation may be introduced this year.

The **Centre for Legal Drafting and Research at the National Assembly**, reporting to the Assembly's Secretariat, is intended to improve the quality of legal drafting through training and consultation on legal analysis, procedures and precedents as well as on the constitutionality of new laws. Project staff have assisted the **Assembly's Human Rights Commission** to better monitor human rights compliance with international standards as well as to improve the Commission's ability to respond to complaints. As a result of this assistance by 11 full-time staff, the rate of follow-up and resolution of cases has increased to 50%.

CMAC is a government agency that undertakes mine clearance and removal of unexploded ordinance (UXO). It began operation in 1993 with support from UNDP and the UN's Department for Humanitarian Affairs. CMAC has 2500 Cambodian staff; the international staff comprise 18 military secondments from 5 countries, plus 9 advisers from 3 other countries. CMAC has cleared 950 square miles, providing an area large enough for cultivation by 32,000 families. It has destroyed 75,000 anti-personnel mines, 411,000 UXO, and 750 anti-tank mines. In addition to clearance operations, it trains de-miners (4000 Cambodians so far), and promotes mine awareness. It has four de-mining units in 4 heavily mined provinces, and conducts activities in 6 others (as well as assisting elsewhere, including Phnom Penh where UXO still turns up occasionally). Most funding is from the UNDP trust fund; the government also provides 20%.

b) Cambodian Ngos

There is an energetic and well-established group of ngos supporting human rights. Many