

CHAPTER IV

CASES OF VIETNAMESE, REPORTED EX-VIETMINH ELEMENTS, WHO ESCAPED INTO CAMBODIAN TERRITORY FROM SOUTH VIETNAM AND SURRENDERED THEMSELVES TO THE CAMBODIAN AUTHORITIES.

1. Case of the 90 Vietnamese who escaped from the Republic of Vietnam in June 1958 and surrendered themselves to the Cambodian authorities (Paragraph 5 of Chapter III refers).

In Chapter III it was mentioned that the case of violation of Cambodian territory by armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam in Stung Treng Province involved the escape into Cambodia of 90 reported Vietminh refugees from Vietnam. One of the terms of reference given to the ad hoc team sent to conduct necessary investigations relating to the violation of Cambodia's frontier was "to verify information given by the Foreign Minister of Cambodia in his formal interview with the Chairman of the Commission whereby the presence of Viet Minh persons (former Resistance Members) who entered Cambodia illegally was reported". The team after visiting the frontier came to Stung Treng on the 6th July, 1958 as the escapees from South Vietnam were kept by the Royal Government under surveillance at Stung Treng. The team was informed that 90 of these escapees entered into Cambodian territory. The team interrogated 89 of the individuals stated to have escaped from the custody of the SOUTH Vietnamese authorities. From the statements made by the individuals the team had reasons to believe that with the exception of seven only, all of them had either been members of the former Resistance Movement or had been somehow connected with it. These escapees claimed to have been arrested between 1955 and 1956 and put into prison without any trial. They claimed that they had been made to work as labourers on the construction of an airfield at CUTY which was said to be in SOUTH VIETNAM close to the border. They claimed that they escaped in batches and that they had not been promised any help by CAMBODIA, which country they entered illegally. These escapees were all male and were in custody of the Royal Government of CAMBODIA at the time of interrogation at STUNG TRENG.

2. The Royal Government in their letter No. 674-DGP/X, dated the 9th August, 1958 (Appendix "D") stated that 90 Vietnamese voluntarily submitted themselves to the Cambodian authorities at the post of Bokeo in the province of Stung Treng and that they were now interned in the province of Stung Treng until a decision on their future was taken. The Royal Government's letter stated that certain individuals speaking on behalf of their comrades stated that from 1945 to 1954 they belonged to Viet Minh formations and that after the Geneva Agreements they had returned home and resumed their previous occupations as cultivators or businessmen and that during the years 1954, 1955 and 1956 South Vietnamese authorities had arrested them and sent them to the internee camp at Cuty along with 445 other political prisoners. According to their statement they escaped to Cambodia as conditions were very hard. They had submitted themselves voluntarily to the Cambodian authorities at Bokeo requesting for authorisation to go to North Vietnam. The Royal Government's letter stated that as they were ex-Viet-Minh elements, they had decided to hand the prisoners over to the Commission for necessary action in conformity with the provisions of the Geneva Agreements. The Commission was requested by the Royal Government to intimate the date when and