



**Special Representative of the Secretary-General
for Human Rights in Cambodia**

គំណាវពិសេសរបស់លោកអគ្គលេខាធិការទទួលបន្ទុកសិទ្ធិមនុស្សប្រចាំកម្ពុជា



**Special Representative, Peter Leuprecht, calls for the cancellation of the
land concession to Wuzhishan L.S. Group in the province of Monduliri**
5 July 2005

The Special Representative asks the Government of Cambodia to cancel the agreement of 9 August 2004 to provide an initial 10,000 hectares of state land to Wuzhishan L.S. Group for a pine tree plantation in Monduliri province, with a promise of a further 189,999 hectares.¹ The Government and the company have disregarded the wellbeing, culture and livelihoods of the Phnong indigenous people who make up more than half the population of the province, and many breaches of the law and of human rights have been committed.

As with other economic land concessions, no environmental or social impact assessments were carried out, and local populations and authorities were neither informed nor consulted. No precise maps of the concession or the sites where the company is operating are available. The present size of the concession is not known but is widely believed to have exceeded the 10,000 hectare ceiling provided for in the 2001 Land Law.

The concession encompasses hilly grasslands and dense forest in the valleys and along the waterways of southern Monduliri. In September 2004, the company started spraying the hills with large amounts of the herbicide glyphosate, later burning sprayed areas. The hills are used by the Phnong to graze their cattle. Their ancestral burial areas and spirit forests have also been desecrated in the process of clearing and planting, and the company has taken their farm lands and rice fields. The concerns of the affected Phnong communities have not been listened to and they are increasingly upset. They are asking for their land back and for the company to leave. The Government has now begun to respond, but with partial measures which risk adding to the confusion.

The concession to Wuzhishan L.S. Group should not have been approved. The Land Law establishes the right of indigenous people to collective title. Key regulations to implement the Land Law have not been adopted, including on state land management, economic land concessions, collective land titling, as well as legislation for determining the criteria for indigenous status.

The Special Representative also requests that no more concessions of state land be approved in Monduliri or elsewhere in Cambodia until the necessary regulations have been adopted and are in effect. He also reiterates the recommendations he made in his November 2004 report on economic land concessions from a human rights perspective.

¹ See report issued June 30 2005, on Wuzhishan L.S. Group and its pine tree plantation in Monduliri. The report is an annex to the Special Representative's November 2004 report on land concessions for economic purposes from a human rights perspective.