



**The Cambodia Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
calls for the disbanding of groups of purported demonstrators**

11 September 1998 - Observation of the demonstrations taking place in Phnom Penh today reveals the presence of groups of purported demonstrators who appear to be agents provocateurs. Some members of these groups, which total several hundred people, claim to be demonstrating in support of the CPP. Many are armed with bamboo or wooden sticks and stones, and some firearms such as pistols have also been seen. Their activities have been widely filmed and photographed by local and international media. The presence of these groups has caused at least one death today, and they have been seen beating several other demonstrators.

The Cambodia Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights calls on the government and security authorities to take urgent measures to disarm and disband these groups. In the current volatile climate, the activities of these groups risks provoking further violence among crowds of demonstrators who have so far been largely peaceful but who may be incited to turn to violent reprisals and revenge. The security forces so far appear to have shown restraint, thereby limiting the violence to a minimum. It is therefore essential that those who seek to provoke violence should be identified and isolated to prevent an escalation in the situation.

The COHCHR once again calls on all political parties, demonstrators and their leaders and the security forces to continue to exercise maximum restraint so that political differences can be resolved without further bloodshed.