



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

តំណាងពិសេសរបស់លោកអគ្គលេខាធិការទទួលបន្ទុកសិទ្ធិមនុស្សប្រចាំកម្ពុជា



**ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CALLS FOR IMPARTIAL
INVESTIGATION INTO KILLING OF CAMBODIAN TRADE UNION LEADER**

The acting United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Bertrand Ramcharan, has condemned the murder of Cambodian trade-union leader Chea Vichea and appealed to the Cambodian authorities to do their utmost in order to bring the killers and their masters to justice.

"The highest levels of political leadership in the country must send a clear message that those responsible for this murder will be held to account", Mr. Ramcharan said. "The problem of impunity remains a central obstacle to the process of building democratic institutions and advancing the enjoyment of human rights under the rule of law in Cambodia".

Chea Vichea, who presided over the Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia, was shot dead on 22 January 2004, the latest in a series of assassinations and attempted murders of prominent figures in Cambodia over the past year. Vichea reportedly had received a number of threats to his life in the months prior to his murder.

Pointing also to reports of the murders of a number of local level opposition activists in the last six months, Mr. Ramcharan stressed that "all States have an obligation to protect their citizens from arbitrary deprivation of life, and must be active in providing this protection where an individual has faced serious threats".

"A thorough and impartial investigation must be publicly established and undertaken, identifying both those who are immediately responsible for the killing of Chea Vichea, as well as those who ordered it", the acting High Commissioner continued. "It is hoped that the prosecutions will take place in a fully transparent manner, in accordance with the due process guarantees contained in the Cambodian Constitution and the international human rights conventions to which Cambodia is a party".

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