

French diplomat learns about the Cambodian Press and Quick Reaction Unit's activities

PHNOM PENH, March 2, 2010 (PQRU) – Cambodian Secretary of State of the Office of the Council of Ministers and also the head of the Press and Quick Reaction Unit (PQRU) told **Her Excellency Laurence Bernardi** of the French Embassy diplomat on Tuesday that the Unit's job is more than reacts to the false information about the government but also gathers critical news for the leaders.

His Excellency Svay Sitha informed Her Excellency Bernardi, First Secretary of the Embassy, and her Cambodian colleague Tung Soklim that there are three departments namely the Press, the Communication and the Logistic and Finance which are the backbone of the Unit. The Unit's job is to produce numbers of articles including editorial pieces, written stories about the activities of **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the **Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Sok An**, also the Minister in Charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers, and others.

His Excellency Svay Sitha also informed the delegation about the function of the Unit, which was established in last June, comprises of now 82 staffs. "We have been well coordinating with the concerned ministries, so it does not mean our Unit's task is overlapping with the Ministry of Information," His Excellency Svay Sitha said in the meeting.

"The way we react is in general news, but when it comes to technical aspects such as legal one we invite the legal experts to work with the Unit in responding to a certain issue," he said. He also said that the Unit's task was to make sure the government's image and the credibility of the leaders are being protected based on the rule of law.

The political news about Thailand has been closely monitored by the Unit given some critical news happened in Bangkok may have some impacts on Cambodia, he said, such as the stories about the Cambodian Temple of Preah Vihear. "Also the issue of spreading the false information by the opposition must be taken into account according to the rule of law."

When asked by Her Excellency Bernardi about the office equipment of the Unit, His Excellency Svay Sitha responded "our office equipment are ageing but they are useable." "Yes, we do need not only new equipment to replace the old ones but we also need full time foreign experts to assist us in producing statement or articles in English and French on time."

His Excellency also recalled that some local newspapers republished insulting and misleading stories from overseas which did not represent the factual situation in this Kingdom and the news editors rejected to print the clarification statement was sent by the Unit. "So we need to have own bulletins to be distributed to the mass public to better understand about the facts in the country," he pointed out. "This is still on my mind, part of my vision."

He also informed Bernardi and her Cambodian colleague that the Unit is also seeking help foreign experts to train the staffs so that to improve their capacities at work. "Our door is very open to all foreign embassies who want to support us in either providing equipment or capacity building," he said.

(Press and Quick Reaction Unit)