

RELEASE IN PART  
B6

---

**From:** Verveer, Melanne S <VerveerMS@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 15, 2012 6:36 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** FW: US calls for release of Boeung Kak activists

Thank you!

---

**From:** Mu Sochua [redacted]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 15, 2012 3:58 AM  
**To:** Yu, Wenchi  
**Cc:** BLOG BLOG  
**Subject:** US calls for release of Boeung Kak activists

B6

The news of the call for release is circulating all around Cambodia. This is the first sign of hope for the Beung Kak Lake 15 since their illegal arrest and imprisonment.

Sec. Clinton's visit to Cambodia in July will allow the women of Cambodia to share with her our vision for the future of our nation.

State violence against women who protest against injustice must stop and economic land concessions impact thousands of families and women are first to bear the brunt.

**US calls for release of Boeung Kak activists**

**Friday, 15 June 2012**

## Shane Worrell and Khouth Sophak Chakrya The Phnom Penh Post



US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks during a visit to Phnom Penh in 2010. Photograph: Sovan Philong/Phnom Penh Post

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has urged the Cambodian government to release 13 Boeung Kak lake women imprisoned after a three-hour trial last month, telling Foreign Minister Hor Namhong at a meeting in Washington that such a move would support freedom of expression.

*“The secretary expressed concern over recent protests regarding land-rights issues and urged Cambodia to allow Boeung Kak lake detainees full access to due process, noting that their release would be a sign of support for freedom of expression,” Sean McIntosh, spokesman for the US embassy in Phnom Penh, said yesterday.*

The women were arrested during a land eviction protest at Boeung Kak on May 22 and charged two days later with disputing authority and trespassing on land awarded to CPP senator Lao Meng Khin’s development firm Shukaku. Two others were arrested while protesting at the trial.

The Phnom Penh Municipal Court tried and sentenced the women, including a 72-year-old, to between one and two-and-a-half years in Prey Sar prison.

Sam Rainsy Party lawmaker Mu Sochua, who in the wake of the trial urged the international community to take action, said Clinton's comments were "very positive".

"There are clearly grounds for her to question the lack of due process," Mu Sochua said from the US, where she too has been meeting with government officials.

"I am positive progress will be made. Let's watch the Appeal Court. I am confident they will be released before Hillary gets to Phnom Penh in July [for the ASEAN Regional Forum].

"I am confident Mr Hor Namhong heard [Clinton's] message. It is a win-win situation to end the case at appeal."

Clinton's comments gave some hope to the Boeung Kak lake community, whose protesters took to the streets again yesterday to urge the authorities to intervene.

"I am very happy [she] is concerned with our community," Ou Kong Chea, the husband of imprisoned activist Tep Vanny, said.

***"I hope the Cambodian government will think about her comments and free our 15 friends."***

Seak Heng, whose wife Kong Chantha is also in Prey Sar, said the issue could no longer be ignored.

"News of this dispute is spreading all over the world, so the authority must resolve it," he said.

Protester Yom Bopha said police blocked and threatened her 100-strong group with arrest as they marched to Prime Minister Hun Sen's house with a petition, which they ended up not giving to waiting officials.

"We feared they would put it in the bin," she said.

Police refused to comment when asked if they had threatened to arrest anyone.

Independent analyst Lao Mong Hay said the government should have the case heard in the Court of Appeal as soon as possible.

"I think the government should implement its 'win-win' policy to resolve this problem for Boeung Kak villagers," he said.

Clinton also reportedly praised Cambodia for not proceeding with its proposed NGO law, which has received widespread criticism, and made comments about the importance of a free and fair national election next year.

***It was up to Cambodians, however, to decide whether the Sam Rainsy Party's self-exiled leader – who faces an 11-year jail sentence on incitement charges – should take part in the ballot, she said, according to the Associated Press.***

Mu Sochua said her party would continue to push for his return, adding she was mostly satisfied US government officials had taken her issues seriously when she had met with them.

She will, however, keep pushing for the US to cut military aid to Cambodia when she attends more meetings in Washington next week.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Koy Kuong declined to comment.