

Evictions

Forced evictions, mostly to build hotels and high-end apartments,

Land grabbing in Asia • CAMBODIA:

Land being leased by Kuwait for rice

have been a problem in Cambodia since the UN peacekeeping force left in 1993.

Adhoc, the Cambodian human rights watchdog, estimates 50,000 people were evicted to make way for development projects in 2006 and 2007 alone.

The problem arose because most land documents were destroyed under the Khmer Rouge regime between 1975 and 1979, making it unclear who owns what.

Yet the practice in Cambodia of leasing land to Gulf States for farming - and the rate at which the land is being siphoned off - is new, say food rights groups.

"The governments [Kuwait and Cambodia] should select (in negotiations) 100,000ha rubber plantation secured

- by Vietnam
 - 100,000ha rubber plantation secured by Vietnam
- PHILIPPINES:

10,000ha for agro-fishery secured by Bahrain

- 100,000ha for Qatar
- 1.24 million hectares for an unknown company in China (on hold)
- INDONESIA:

500,000ha, a \$4.3 billion rice investment, secured by Bin Laden Group of Saudi Arabia (on hold)

 CHINA:
10 poultry farms worth \$300 million and pig farms for \$250-300 million purchased by Goldman Sachs of USA
Source: International Food Policy Research Institute

appropriate land through discussion with the villagers, and combine the traditional farming in Cambodia and new technology for farming," Ju added.

Food insecurity

The problem of land grabbing by foreign investors and governments, however, extends well beyond the confines of Cambodia.

Elsewhere in Asia similar examples can be seen, as well as in Africa. According to the Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), between 15 and 20 million hectares of farmland in such countries have been subject to transactions or negotiations since 2006.

IFPRI estimates the value of such deals at up to \$30 billion.

Ever since high food prices in 2007 and 2008 raised the prospect of food insecurity for countries without much farmland, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have scoured Asia for land.

China, which has to feed more than one billion people, is also looking to Southeast Asia to sustain its breakneck growth.

"Not only will it displace small farmers as such investments have done in Indonesia," said Amitava Mukherjee, head of the UN Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery in Beijing, "but it will also have serious environmental consequences ... [and] given that UAE



Photo: Jefri Aries/IRIN 🔍 oldman Sachs has invested in pig Irms in China (file photo)

and Kuwait are leasing land, not buying it, [they] would have no interest in long-term development of the farmland they are seeking access to".

He added that the comments were his own and did not reflect the views of the UN.

In Kamukhaan village in the Philippines, such effects have become well documented, according to the AHRC.

Since a Filipino company took over 613ha in the village to build a banana plantation in 1981 - to supply US-based fruit company Dole - hundreds of villagers have suffered skin and respiratory ailments from pesticide use, the group claims.

"The farmers had lost their farmland, their children, their natural



Nigerians on the run

How to reduce flood impacts in Pakistan

Drawing a plan to avert disasters

Egypt braces for subsidy shake-up

Analysis: Syrian rebels and IHL

Syrian rebels on IHL: In their own words

MOST READ



Malaria overstretching healthcare in DRC

Helping displaced children in rebelheld parts of Kachin

Syrians seeking refuge in Libya

Careless food storage sidelines Swaziland's hungry

How To: Get medical aid kits to Aleppo, Syria

Mixed messages on home deliveries in Philippines sources, their health and their future," Ju said.

"Now the Philippines' food sovereignty is absent and the selfsufficiency is almost zero," she claimed.

In the Philippines this year, Bahrain secured 10,000ha for agrofishery, Qatar leased 100,000ha, and an unknown company from China leased 1.24 million hectares, though the deal has been put on hold, according to an Apr



Photo: Stacey Winston/ECHO A Myanmar has "considerable" agricultural potential, according to Welt Hunger Hilfe, a German NGO

hold, according to an April policy briefing by IFPRI.

Such deals are often done in secret, it says, stopping civil society groups from overseeing the terms and defending the rights of local farmers.

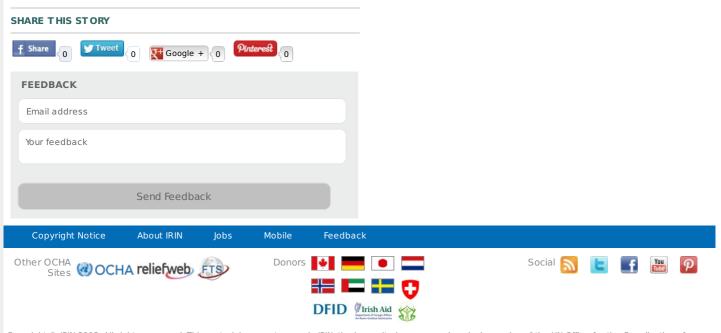
In Myanmar, Chinese companies have driven farmers off their land to cultivate an oil plant, according to Welt Hunger Hilfe, a German NGO.

The farmers already faced seasonal changes that threatened food security, but had their last source of food taken from them by the government, the group says.

gc/ds/mw

Theme (s): Early Warning, Economy, Food Security, Human Rights,

[This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations]



Copyright © IRIN 2013. All rights reserved. This material comes to you via IRIN, the humanitarian news and analysis service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations or its Member States. The boundaries, names and designations used on maps on this site and links to external sites do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the UN. Republication is subject to terms and conditions as set out in the IRIN copyright page.