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## Detail News

### July sub-decrees list Preah Vihear grants

Source From: Phnom Penh Post

More than 45,000 hectares of land in Preah Vihear province were granted to five companies for rubber plantations on July 6 after the government reclassified the land from state public to state private land on the same day, according to the five sub-decrees signed by Prime Minister Hun Sen.

The sub-decrees were published in the Royal Book, which lists all sub-decrees issued by the government, a copy of which was obtained by the Post yesterday.

Ouch Leng, head of the land program at rights group Adhoc, said all five of the companies were Chinese-owned. The Post could not confirm who owned the firms, or find any information about previous business deals they were involved in. "I suspect that all five companies are owned by one tycoon, and Adhoc is investigating this," Ouch Leng added.

Under the 2001 Land Law, the size of economic land concessions is capped at 10,000 hectares, but investors have used multiple firms to gain larger concessions, investigations have found. Ownership of concessions is often opaque as are the payments made to obtain them, land rights groups have said.

The concessions signed this summer reclassified 44,780 hectares in three adjacent districts of Preah Vihear to five companies:

- Heng Rouy Cambodia International Company Limited was granted 9,119 hectares of land in Chey Sen and Chhep districts
- Heng You Cambodian International Company Limited was granted 8,959 hectares in Chepp district
- Lan Vheng Cambodia International Company Limited was given 9,015 hectares in Chey Sen district
- Roy Vheng Cambodia International Company Limited was given 8,841 hectares in Chepp district
- Kim Chea Thoun Group was given 8,846 hectares in Rovieng district

Chan Saron, a minister at the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, declined to comment on the ELCs, referring questions to his ministry's deputy director of the Department of Planning Statistics and International Co-operation, Chay Sakun. Chay Sakun, however, declined to comment, suggesting the Post "check the ministry's website. Everything is on the website". No information about ELCs has been added to the ministry's website since April 2010.

Sar Thavy, deputy governor of Preah Vihear, said: "I don't know anything related to the companies that received economic land concessions in my province." He referred questions to the provincial land management department.

Kong Sophoan, director of the department, said he had received no information about companies receiving ELCs. "This issue is under the ministry of agriculture," he said. "According to the land concession policy, if the government grants land to a company and it affects villagers, they have to remove villagers' land from their concession or negotiate with the villagers," he said.

Ouch Leng said the government was well aware ELCs sparked conflicts between companies and villagers.

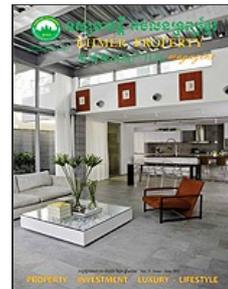
"The government will not find a resolution to land disputes if it does not stop granting ELCs to private companies," he said. "These conflicts are created by the government itself."

From: Cambodia

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