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Monday, April 10, 2006

Ann Mardy group is accused on encroaching villagers land in Kompong Thom

Monday, April 10, 2006

Villagers Accuse Firm of Encroaching on Land

By Pin Sisovann THE CAMBODIA DAILY

About 100 villagers from Kompong Thorn province's Prasat Balang district protested for the third time on Friday against a private firm that they accuse of bulldozing their land and filling in a lake, officials said Sunday.

Thong Vibol Sokhom, the province's Cambodia Center for Human Rights coordinator, said 70 families took part, claiming that the Ann Mardy Group has threatened their livelihoods and demanding that its 10,000-hectare acacia concession stop encroaching on their territory.

"They just yelled their protests and held up their papers," he said.

The protest, which ended on the orders of district officials, stood in contrast to one that took place over the same concession on March 14, when than 100 villagers wielded machetes.

Sok Pheng, Sam Rainsy Party lawmaker for Kompong Thorn province, said 750 families will be adversely affected by the concession. "The government should have consulted the local people," he added.

Svay Sothy, deputy president of the Ann Mardy Group, declined to discuss the project.

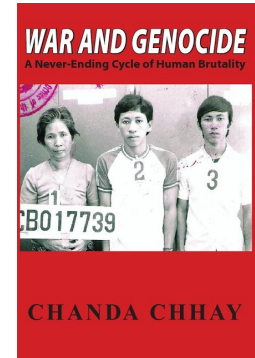
Nam Tum, Kompong Thorn provincial governor, said the firm is not filling in any lakes or clearing any private land—only state-owned property.

"We need development," he said "[Villagers] better develop and change their businesses like others."

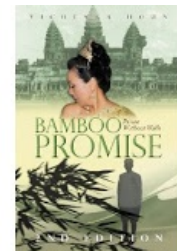
He said he would consult the government in Phnoin Penh over the case, adding that a solution for the villagers should be reached after Khmer New Year, which starts on Friday.

Posted by KI Media at 11:58 AM

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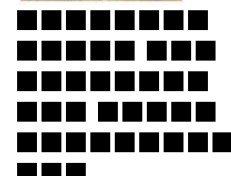
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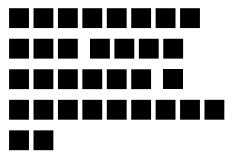
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