



# គណៈកម្មាធិការដើម្បីការបោះឆ្នោតដោយសេរី និងយុត្តិធម៌លើកម្ពុជា (គ.ប.ស.យ)

COMMITTEE FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN CAMBODIA (COMFREL)

ទីស្នាក់ការកណ្តាល ផ្ទះលេខ ១៣៨ ផ្លូវ ១២២ សង្កាត់ទឹកល្អក់ ១ ខ័ណ្ឌទួលគោក រាជធានីភ្នំពេញ ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា  
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## First Preliminary Report On Irregularities in Voter List Revision and Voter Registration

*Phnom Penh, October 02, 2007*

During the process of voter list revision and voter registration for 2007, lasting from September 15 to October 20, 2007, **COMFREL** has deployed around **200 observers** to observe in 400 communes/sangkats across 24 provinces/cities.<sup>1</sup>

In general, **COMFREL** observes that both the **political and security environment have been improved**, although some voters used to or have felt concerns about insecurity, as in previous pre-national election periods. **COMFREL highly appreciates the efforts of the National Election Committee (NEC) and officials at all levels, especially village and commune authorities, who have been carrying out voter list revision and voter registration. In some communes, clerks and councils have worked together to create mobile registration working groups to register voters in villages.**

However, **COMFREL** observes that **the speed of voter registration this year is slower** than that of last year. According to NEC temporary results, dated September 28, 2007, by September 26, 2007, in 1,608 communes/sangkats across 24 provinces/cities, the number of newly registered voters was **233,776**, which represents **34%** of the NEC estimate of **682,459**. For the same period in 2006, the rate of voter registration was 47% (273,477 of an estimated 577,205 new voters to be registered).

Meanwhile, **COMFREL has doubts about the NEC's unclear estimates on the number of voters to be registered**, as the NEC made a wrong estimate number of new voters to be registered in 2006 (estimating around 570,000 new voters while in reality the number had increased to 1.2 million). The NEC claimed that the overestimate owed to relocations: some people had registered at a new polling station without telling the authority to remove their name from their previous polling station. This caused around 1% of cases being 'double names' (around 78,000 names).

This year, the NEC conducted a big campaign to clean voter lists. Around 650,000 voter names could be removed from voter lists. According to NEC estimates, the number of new voters to be registered may be as high as 680,000. **The NEC is yet to have a clear explanation on that number and the accuracy of these estimates.**

According to COMFREL observers, pattern irregularities regarding voter list revision and voter registration include: not following procedure, not respecting working hours; and not posting publicly Form 1025 (the names of voters to be removed).

For instance, in Sre Nouy commune, Varin district, Siem Reap province, the official in charge did not post the 2006 final voter list until September 19, 2007. In sangkat Ou Chrov,

<sup>1</sup> One observer observes in two communes.

khan Prey Nob, Sihanoukville, Kaoh Khchong village chief and vice-chief recorded some people's names for registration, charging each person 3,000 Riel.

In another case, COMFREL found that five armed soldiers of Battambang Sub-Division 2 had suggested to people, some of whom did not have enough documents, not to register their name on voter lists. This case happened in Boeung Pram (located in Bavel, Lvea and Prey Khpos communes).

COMFREL also found cases of irregularity in three communes of Memot district in Kampong Cham province (Dar, Memot and Tromoung) regarding data error of Form 1025. In Tromoung commune, the number of extracted voter names provided by the commune chief was 341 but when the names were sent back from the NEC, the number had increased to 844 names. In Dar commune, the number of extracted voter names changes had grown from 314 to 826 names. In Memot commune, the number had increased from 134 to 634 persons. The provincial election secretariat official for Kampong Cham said that this number had been estimated after low turnout of voters for the 2007 commune council elections.

Related to the 802 families (3,202 persons) evicted from Village 14 (Sambok Chab), sangkat Tonle Basac in Phnom Penh to Andoung Thmey village in sangkat Kouk Rokar, khan Dangkao, by September 26, 2007, **only around 350 people, equal to 20%, of those aged 18 and above (1,715 people)** had registered on the voter list. COMFREL continues to observe and encourage voters to register, although the authorities claim that these groups do not have enough documents or cite other reasons for the discrepancy.

The NEC procedure is complicated. As such, COMFREL will continue to educate people to understand and pay attention to voter list revision and voter registration by means of the radio and other educational materials.

**The NEC should find a way to speed up the voter registration process, and especially to ensure that commune clerks respect working hours before and after the Pchum Ben Festival and to create more mobile registration stations in the villages.**

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*COMFREL's mission is to help to create an informed and favorable democratic climate (1) **for free and fair elections** through lobbying and advocacy to establish a permanent and suitable legal framework; education to inform citizens of their rights; and monitoring activities that both discourage irregularities and provide comprehensive data to enable an objective, non-partisan assessment to be made of the election process, and (2) for the general public to **fully understand democratic processes not just before elections but after and between them.** It arranges, towards this end, educational sessions and public forums to encourage citizens to participate in politics and decision making. It encourages constructive advocacy and lobbying for electoral reforms that increase the accountability of elected officials. Finally, by providing comprehensive observation and monitoring, it enables objective, non-partisan assessments to be made on the progress of commitment made in political platforms and on the performance of elected officials.*