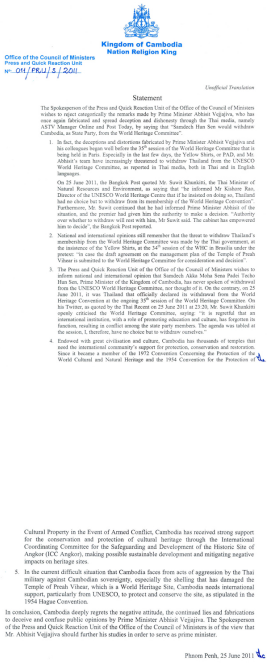
The Office of the Council of Ministers’ Press and Quick Reaction Unit has issued a statement as follow:



Kingdom of Cambodia
Nation Religion King

Office of the Council of Ministers
Press and Quick Reaction Unit
ឯកសារ លេខ ...../ សជប/ ២០១...

Unofficial Translation

Statement

The Spokesperson of the Press and Quick Reaction Unit of the Office of the Council of Ministers wishes to reject categorically the remarks made by Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, who has once again fabricated and spread deception and dishonesty through the Thai media, namely (ASTV Manager Online and Post Today, by saying that "Samdech Hun Sen would withdraw Cambodia, as State Party, from the World Heritage Committee".

1. In fact, the deceptions and distortions fabricated by Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and his colleagues began well before the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee that is being held in Paris. Especially in the last few days, the Yellow Shirts, or PAD, and Mr. Abhisit's team have increasingly threatened to withdraw Thailand from the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, as reported in Thai media, both in Thai and in English languages.

   On 25 June 2011, the Bangkok Post quoted Mr. Suwit Khunkitti, the Thai Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, as saying that "he informed Mr Kishore Rao, Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre that if he insisted on doing so, Thailand had no choice but to withdraw from its membership of the World Heritage Convention". Furthermore, Mr. Suwit continued that he had informed Prime Minister Abhisit of the situation, and the premier had given him the authority to make a decision. "Authority was delegated to me during the Cabinet meeting, Mr Suwit said. The cabinet has empowered him to decide", the Bangkok Post reported.

2. National and international opinions still remember that the threat to withdraw Thailand's membership from the World Heritage Committee was made by the Thai government, at the insistence of the Yellow Shirts, at the 34th session of the WHC in Brasilia under the pretext: "in case the draft agreement on the management plan of the Temple of Preah Vihear is submitted to the World Heritage Committee for consideration and decision".

3. The Press and Quick Reaction Unit of the Office of the Council of Ministers wishes to inform national and international opinion that Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, has never spoken of withdrawal from the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, nor thought of it. On the contrary, on 25 June 2011, it was Thailand that officially declared its withdrawal from the World Heritage Convention at the ongoing 35th session of the World Heritage Committee. On his Twitter, as quoted by the Thai Recent on 25 June 2011 at 23:20, Mr. Suwit Khunkitti openly criticised the World Heritage Committee, saying "it is regretful that an international institution, with a role of promoting education and culture, has forgotten its function, resulting in conflict among the state party members. The agenda was tabled at the session, I, therefore, have no choice but to withdraw ourselves."

4. Endowed with great civilisation and culture, Cambodia has thousands of temples that need the international community's support for protection, conservation and restoration. Since it became a member of the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the 1954 Convention for the Protection of the Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, Cambodia has received strong support for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage through the International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor (ICC Angkor), making possible sustainable development and mitigating negative impacts on heritage sites.

5. In the current difficult situation that Cambodia faces from acts of aggression by the Thai military against Cambodian sovereignty, especially the shelling that has damaged the Temple of Preah Vihear, which is a World Heritage Site, Cambodia needs international support, particularly from UNESCO, to protect and conserve the site, as stipulated in the 1954 Hague Convention.

In conclusion, Cambodia deeply regrets the negative attitude, the continued lies and fabrications to deceive and confuse public opinions by Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva. The Spokesperson of the Press and Quick Reaction Unit of the Office of the Council of Ministers is of the view that Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva should further his studies in order to serve as prime minister.

Phnom Penh, 25 June 2011