



KMD welcomes France’s 1997 grenade attack trial, calls for French involvement in Lim Kimya case

The Khmer Movement for Democracy welcomes the news that two Cambodian generals accused of involvement in a grenade attack intended to kill opposition leader Sam Rainsy in Phnom Penh in 1997 will take place in Paris from March 19 to 21.

Sixteen people died in the attack, and more than 100 people were wounded. An account of the attack written by Rich Garella and Eric Pape, “A Tragedy of No Importance,” [can be found here](#).

The two men who will be on trial are Huy Piseth and Hing Bun Heang. At the time of the attack, Huy Piseth was head of Prime Minister Hun Sen’s bodyguard unit and Hing Bun Heang was its deputy chief.

This will be the first time that any judiciary has sought to establish what happened on March 30, 1997.

The French judiciary also has a key part to play in the investigation of the killing of Lim Kimya, who held French and Cambodian citizenship, in Bangkok in January.

Lim Kimya was a former member of parliament for the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), a peaceful opposition party co-founded by Sam Rainsy and Kem Sokha in 2012.

Thailand has acted quickly to identify and arrest his assassin, Ekkalak Pheanoi. However, there are good reasons to believe that Ekkalak Pheanoi did not act alone.

Thailand has also issued arrest warrants for Ly Ratanakreaksmey and Pich Kimsrin for their suspected role in the killing, a step which has been reinforced through the issuance of an Interpol "Red Notice."

Ly Ratanakreaksmey is suspected of being in charge of logistical details of the operation, such as the assassin’s escape to Cambodia after the mission was accomplished. Pich Kimsrin is suspected of being the “spotter” who followed Lim Kimya on his bus journey from Siem Reap to Bangkok on the day of his death.

Pich Kimsrin is the brother of Pich Sros, the president of government-aligned Cambodian Youth Party, who filed the legal complaint that led to the banning of the CNRP by Cambodia’s supreme court in 2017.

In the face of this lack of co-operation with Thailand and Interpol, we believe that the best chance of establishing the full truth in relation to the killing lies in a joint international investigation in which France must be involved.

