

27 MAY 1997

Cambodia-Politics

CAMBODIAN POLITICAL PARTY SEEKS MALAYSIA'S HELP TO BRING PEACE

By: R.Ravichandran

KUALA LUMPUR, May 27 (Bernama) -- As political tensions heightened in Cambodia, a political party in that country has asked Malaysia to help bring peace and stability to the Southeast Asian nation.

President of the Cambodia Free Independent Democracy Party (CFIDP) Dr Mohamed Long Bora Abdullah said today that he would ask Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to bring the two important factions in his country to the conference table to solve their political differences.

"The Cambodian people and I have great respect for Dr Mahathir and I hope he can help us ," Dr Mohamed, who is on a private visit here, said in an interview here.

Dr Mohamed said he would convey the party's request that the leaders of the two factions be invited to Kuala Lumpur when he had a chance to meet Dr Mahathir.

Cambodia's First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Second Prime Minister Hun Sen are locked in a political battle which has raised fears that the former war-torn country is heading back to serious political instability.

Prince Ranariddh is the leader of the royalist FUNCINPEC party while Hun Sen heads the former communist Cambodian People's Party (CPP).

Both parties are the main partners in the ruling coalition and in recent months have traded allegations of meddling in their internal affairs in their pursuit to strenghten their political base.

Expressing confidence that Ranariddh and Hun Sen would agree to such a meeting, Dr Mohamed said that Malaysia was in the best position to play this role because of its large investment in his country.

Dr Mohamed said political stability was imporant to ensure continued foreign investment and the entry of Cambodia into Asean, expected to be this year.

The 57-year-old lawyer-turned-politician said his party would contest the elections next year without joining any alliance.

Although the CFIDP lost the 1993 election without a single seat it nevertheless came fourth with one million votes.The party claims a membership of 150,000.

A 1993 United Nations brokered election brought the nation of eight million people democracy and peace after more than 20 years of war.

Commenting on the killing of two Malaysians in Cambodia last week, Dr Mohamed said that he would ask Phnom Penh to send those involved to Malaysia to face trial here.

"Our laws are very weak at present," he added. -- BERNAMA

RV AAM