

Cambodian PM thanks Anwar for expelling his rival – report

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Bernama

Malaysian authorities have reportedly deported the Cambodian opposition figure Sam Rainsy this morning after preventing him and his entourage from holding a meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

According to Cambodian news outlet Khmer Times, the country's Prime Minister Hun Sen said Rainsy had entered Malaysia via private jet while travelling on a French passport. This purportedly allowed him to evade the scrutiny of the Malaysian authorities.

Rainsy was supposed to hold a meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, but the authorities purportedly prevented him from doing so.

The daily quoted Hun Sen expressing thanks to his Malaysian counterpart for the expulsion.

“Thank you, His Excellency Mr Anwar Ibrahim, prime minister of Malaysia, for promising me four times not to let this (Rainsy) come. He does not know, they

come from the private sector and use French passports (...)

“His Excellency Anwar Ibrahim told me clearly (Rainsy was) not to come, and I told him that if he came, the (Cambodian) government and the (Malaysian) government would not look at each other,” Hun Sen was quoted as saying.

Rainsy, former leader of the Cambodian opposition, has been living in self-imposed exile in Paris since 2015, but had announced plans to return to Cambodia in 2019 to rally opposition against Hun Sen’s rule.

However, attempts to do so have been thwarted by airlines’ refusal to allow him to board, after the Cambodian government reportedly threatened airlines that they could be prosecuted as accomplices of an attempted coup.

Thailand, from where he had planned to travel by land into Cambodia, has also denied him entry upon Cambodia’s request.

Rainsy’s last public appearance in Malaysia was in 2019, where he and another opposition figure Mu Sochua met with Malaysian lawmakers from both sides of the political divide for an informal meeting in Parliament.

They were invited by then Permatang Pauh MP Nurul Izzah Anwar.

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