

COMMUNITY OF AIDS VICTIMS EVICTED ILLEGALLY

A community of AIDS victims by the Olympic Market in Phnom Penh is in serious jeopardy of being evicted by developers. The community, which includes 30 families and approximately 100 men, women and children, has lived in the area for over two years. Most members of community, including many children, suffer from AIDS or advanced HIV. The community has already been forced to move once to make way for a new Ministry of Tourism and commercial complexes. The low-lying area that they now inhabit is in severe danger of flooding during the rainy season. Flooding will result in destruction of personal property and health hazards, including dengue and malaria. This will particularly affect children and the elderly, who are most at risk for contracting these diseases.

Citizens are denied their basic rights of clean drinking and bathing water. Though they had clean water their old homes, the government refuses to build pipelines their new homes. As a result, community members must pay for bottled water from their meager earnings. Those who are too sick to transport water on their own must pay extra for delivery.

Current development threatens to push these citizens out of their new homes. They will be relocated 20 to 30 kilometers away, far from their daily lives and livelihoods in Phnom Penh. They are given no choice as to their resettlement location. Many are distressed because the new housing is small and of poor quality.

The local elected representative has refused to negotiate to protect the rights of the people. He has recently joined the CPP.

Many in the community are sick and dying. Many suffer from complications related to the progression of the AIDS virus, including stomach problems, fatigue and blindness. The rights of widowed, divorced and separated women are most at risk because they are single-handedly supporting themselves and their children. In addition, women care for children of relatives who have died. Children are malnourished and sick. Only some attend school, thanks to cooperating non-governmental organizations.

Families support themselves by collecting bottles or sewing and producing clothing. This work does not adequately provide for their needs, as it is low-paying. The sickest in the community cannot support themselves because they are too ill to work.

Non-governmental organizations, including CARE and Friends International, continue to help the victims, providing anti-retroviral drugs and opportunities for employment. Despite their involvement, they refuse to petition the government for



Grandmother, mother and child. The mother is blind due to AIDS complications and relies on her son to lead her in her daily activities. Her mother supports the family by doing piecemeal tailoring, an unreliable living.

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Families living in slums, pushed out of their housing illegally and subjected to inhumane living conditions.



The shacks inhabited by the community are unsanitary and low-lying, putting community members at risk of diseases like dengue and encephalitis.

a reprieve in the eviction. They pledge to continue their work with their community in its future location.

MP Mu Sochua's Response:

The current situation is an abuse of human rights and a miscarriage of justice. Citizens deserve adequate housing within the city limits, which must include clean water and electricity. Citizens also deserve compensation for their mistreatment. Their health and childcare needs must be provided for by the government.

MP Mu Sochua supports the community and regularly visits. She will continue to fight for their rights in her capacity as Member of Parliament.