



EUROPEAN UNION

សហភាពអឺរ៉ុប

EU-Assistance on curbing Small Arms and light weapons in Cambodia

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EU-ASAC

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EU ASAC Press Release on Weapons Destruction in Pursat, 27 April 2005

“EU ASAC to assist in destruction of 4,700 weapons in Pursat province...”

Phnom Penh: 24 April 2005

EU ASAC, the programme of the European Union to assist Cambodia in small arms management, is pleased to announce that the 39th Flame of Peace ceremony in Cambodia, at which over 4,700 surplus military weapons will be destroyed, is to be held in Pursat, on **Wednesday afternoon, 27 April 2005**. H.E. Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister and Co-Minister of the Interior will preside at the ceremony.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has regularly been destroying surplus weapons that have either been confiscated as illegal weapons from the civilian population or declared surplus weapons by the Ministry of National Defence. After the destruction in Pursat the total number of weapons destroyed in Cambodia since May 1999 will be over 158,000. EU ASAC will have given financial and technical assistance for the destruction of over 110,000 of these weapons.

Mr. David de Beer, EU ASAC Project Manager, underlined the importance of the Pursat destruction ceremony. “Pursat has been central to the work of EU ASAC in Cambodia. The first Flame of Peace ceremony in Cambodia was held in Pursat in January 2001 and EU ASAC has conducted Weapons for Development campaigns in the province, has assisted in giving the police extra training and equipment and in 2004 set up a programme to train Commune Council to take responsibility for Weapons Security. For the people of Pursat it is important that they know these activities result in the destruction of weapons that once caused so much death and destruction.”

One of EU ASAC’s major activities is to assist the Ministry of National Defence implement a Weapons Registration and Safe Storage project for all small arms and light weapons (SALW) under their control. Since 2001 all SALW in five military regions have been registered in a centralised computer database and securely stored. Similar projects are being implemented in 2005 in the last remaining region, Special Military Region (Phnom Penh), and in all provinces with the Royal Gendarmerie. After each of these projects thousands of weapons are allocated for destruction as surplus weapons.

Mr. de Beer, who has just returned from a United Nations Workshop on Small Arms in Beijing, said that the international community was impressed by the position taken by the Royal Cambodian Government in destroying illegal and surplus weapons as part of its strategy to improve weapons management in the country.

For further information on the work of EU ASAC please consult its website: <http://www.eu-asac.org> or contact David de Beer, Programme Manager, at (023) 214 805

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