



24 April 2021, after finishing the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting, in Jakarta, Samdech Techo Hun Sen holds a bilateral talk with H.E. Joko Widodo, President of Indonesia

April Updates on Covid-19 Situation

(10 April 2021 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

Today, I have a need to inform my compatriots about some issues. Before entering into the issues, let me take this opportunity to mourn with the families of those who have passed away. As of yesterday, 24 deaths were the first recorded in the period of more than one year of Covid-19 striking. At the same time, I would like to avail to those who are Covid-19 positive, as well as those who are in quarantines, my inquisition for their states of health.

Covid-19 Corpses Cremation/Burial Ground Preparations Allegedly Despise Human Life

As Your Venerable and our compatriots know already that I have commanded the Ministry of Health and the local authorities to get ready crematoriums as well as land for burial of corpses (caused by Covid-19) according to the traditions of each ethnic group in the Kingdom of Cambodia. At that time, some people said that I despised the lives of the people. May all my compatriots think if I do not take one-step ahead, when there are corpses like we already did recently, what health and other

measures, can we take? How do we go about with the burial or cremation? It was because we went one-step ahead that we were able to solve this problem.

Covid-19 Variants and Improper Governance Result in Increased Number of Infections

In relation to Covid-19 outbreak, which we call the February 20 Events, so far it has not subsided, but it is getting worse. Although we have strict response measures, due to the early arrival of the so-called Covid-19 variants and poor governance in some places, it has brought about a devastating aftermath. In more than a year (since the Covid-19 started), our country had just over 500 patients, but today our number has reached 4,080. Yesterday, 576 more people were infected, and today, another 483 are infected. In the past, it was rare for us to say a dozen people were infected. From February 20 onwards, dozens a day used every day. These two days we have come to hundreds of infection a day. This is a terrible event for the

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Phnom Penh & Ta Khmao in Lockdown

(14 April 2021 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

Today there was little turmoil before the Royal Government's decision to close down Phnom Penh and Takhmao. **The purpose of the closure was to combat the spread of Covid-19, and the process of closing down would not bring about deaths or sufferings to our people. Despite the impacts, we have thought in advanced about how, despite closing down, our people can go on living a rather normal life.** Once closed, everyone must apply (prohibition to) travel out of/leave homes or residences when it is not necessary. They may still do so if it is necessary ... such as in the case of traveling to works or for businesses, or businesses in the lockdown areas not prohibited in Article 3 (of the decision) while presenting relevant documents.

Traveling to food shops or grocery stores or daily necessities authorized by the competent authority (etc.) ... may be made by a maximum of two members per residence or location and no more than three times a week to the nearest ones within your geographical area or district. You must present your identity cards or ID cards. Coming to this point, that food stalls, groceries and daily necessities will be allowed to (continue to operations), you may all be aware that ... (this) is not a closure to starve people of food to death.

Traveling to the hospital, to the health center, to the pharmacy or emergency room in a lockdown areas is still possible. You may want to see the details outlined in the said decision of the Royal Government. The process of taking samples of Covid-19 virus and getting vaccination is functioning normally in the lockdown areas, meaning that the vaccination sites in Phnom Penh or Takhmao are still in operations. As usual, **travelling for the sake of participating in activities for public interest or other necessary purposes at the request of the public authority is still possible.** Individual sports activities in the geographical area where you live, avoiding gatherings of more than two people, is possible. You can still exercise in your village, but please do not go beyond the village and do not have too many people together.

Travel of diplomats, travel of journalists with documents (of certification); air travel; travel for other necessary reasons with the permission of the authorities are also possible in the lockdown circle. By outlining these points, you will be able to understand the real purpose of the Royal Government (that it was not for the purpose of) killing people. Of course, I must apologize that while we have yet to decide on the matter, some irresponsible persons in the leadership of the party and the state leaked the news, which I sincerely admit that the action taken to discipline it later when we find out.

Another point to emphasize here is that businesses in Phnom Penh considered not necessary will be closing. There is an exception though that the works/activities of public institutions and the armed forces must continue. It is unavoidable but there have to have a small number of people and the head of the relevant institutions are taking responsibility. Factories, handicrafts or food and beverage production facilities, including slaughterhouses, which are for

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Kingdom of Cambodia. Our neighbors, like Vietnam, managed well in its community transmission before us. Thailand is also doing a good job, though with the latest outbreak in the last few days in Bangkok. For us, the attacks were in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, with smaller clusters in the provinces. The worst attack was for Phnom Penh, where only one garment factory, Din Han, had 638 people infected, while Orussey Market was also heavily infected.

Travel Bans, Closing Resorts across the Country to Cut Off Transmission Links

In such a situation, the Royal Government and the sub-national authorities are required to adopt measures, in which the Royal Government has issued a sub-decree outlaying administrative measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and other dangerous infectious diseases. Next, I issued a decision to ban traveling and temporarily closing resorts across the country to prevent the spread of Covid-19 disease. This means that we need to prevent the flow of disease from one area to another for the sake of cutting its transmission links off. Admittedly, the 14-day moratorium may not be enough. We will check further. Sub-national authorities, such as Phnom Penh, have closed some areas and last night administered lockdowns of three districts. Siem Reap, Sihanoukville and some other provinces had been in lockdowns, and (certain places) are still doing so too.

State Intervention on Families of Covid-19 Dead, Positive and Lockdowns

In such a situation, in order to facilitate the livelihood of the people in the phase of loss of family life, with Covid-19 positive, as well as families that are in lockdown, I have the need to come up with assistance intervention as much as possible, but it is a real possibility. This applies not only to Phnom Penh, but the whole country and only in the case of February 20, 2021, without going back to events before February 20. Today, in addition to the interventions that I will bring up a little later, I am

going to talk about measures taken in response to the dire situation that we need to cut off transmission from one person to another by blocking the passage and/or requiring a quarantine. These requirements demanded that we take into account the people's livelihood. I would start with the (state) intervention for the families of Cambodians whose members died of Covid-19.

(1) The state will help pay for clean water and electricity bills at a reasonable minimum for five months from the month of the Covid-19 family member death.

I would like to emphasize this point. Previously, each corpse received 10 million Riels and 100 kg of rice. This means that 5 million Riel received from the Ministry of Health, 5 million Riel and another 100 kg of rice received from Phnom Penh City Hall as support. In addition to this support, the families of those who have died (of Covid-19) the state will provide assistance by paying for water and electricity bills for five months. We have just 24 dead, including foreigners, Koreans and Chinese. We only deal with Cambodians. This can be a relief for survivors without having to pay for water and electricity bills for five months. It is also a relief for families who have lost family members. This is the first intervention for families whose member/s died due to Covid-19. I would like to emphasize here is that we apply this (policy only for the dead) of Covid-19 and not for all the dead.

(2) For families where member/s are Covid-19 positive but has not died, the state will help pay for a reasonable minimum amount of water and electricity bills within three months from the month in which one of the family members became Covid-19 infected, with confirmation from the competent authorities.

This means that any family with members are Covid-19 positive, the state will help pay the costs of water and electricity used for three months. I would also like to clarify here that in a family of five people, for instance, if all are positive, we pay both water

and electricity bills because they are together under one roof. We cannot divide it into five. Therefore, the state will help pay for water and electricity for (families of the) Covid-19 positive for three months. This can reduce the difficulty for people with Covid-19.

(3) For the families affected by the quarantine in the area where lockdown measures are in place, the state will subsidize 300,000 Riels per family and help pay for water and electricity bills at a reasonable minimum for two months. This will count from the month in which the competent authority enforces the lockdown measures. Those have had the quarantine at regular (Covid-19 quarantine) center and/or outside the lockdown area, are to receive supports according to the principles implemented in force.

This point has two parts that I would like to present and inform. Those outside the lockdown area, the Royal Government will provide a subsidy of 300,000 riel in cash per family and pay for water and electricity bills for two months. This is for those who are not in areas blocked by the authorities. For those who are in lockdown areas, the state will also donate 300,000 Riels subsidy in cash per family and will pay for water and electricity bills for two months. As they cannot go anywhere, in addition to the 300,000 Riels cash subsidy and the payments for water and electricity for two months, I issued order to Phnom Penh Capital Hall, and the whole country, to provide each family with 25 kg of rice, a small box of (instant) noodles and 20 cans of canned fish. This arrangement is to apply also to others in quarantines outside of the lockdown areas. This kind of intervention is similar to the one we offered to people in disaster management intervention.

I would like to emphasize that for workers who are Covid-19 positive and in quarantines, even one person is considered as one family. His Excellency the Mayor of Phnom Penh and the provincial governors, consider a person who lives alone in a rented house, his family far away, as

a family. For water/electricity, a room can be rented and housed two or three people. We pay for water and electricity for only one room with two or three people ... this payment is on behalf of workers who is Covid-19 positive and we pay (water/electricity bills) for up to 3 months. However, (workers) who are in quarantines, we pay (water/electricity bills) for 2 months in addition to receiving various subsidies.

This is a confirmation. Firstly, the state pays on their behalf water and electricity bills for five months, in the case of those who died due to Covid-19. Secondly, for those Covid-19 positive, the state settles those bills for 3 months on their behalves. Thirdly, for those who are in quarantines in lockdown area, we settle the bills for two months. However, support is needed for families of the Covid-19 positive hospitalized. We have to support them. When a family member stays in the hospital, either a father or sibling, (although he/she) receives support at the hospital, the family should receive support too. While their member/s hospitalized and received supports at the hospital free of charge from the state, the families also received subsidies while in quarantines. I would like to entrust the *Deputy Prime Minister, HE Aun Porn Moniroth, Chairman of the Economic and Financial Policy Committee and also the Minister of Economy and Finance, to coordinate with the relevant ministries and institutions to set the appropriate minimum level with the Electricité du Cambodge (EDC) and the Water Supply Authority [...]*

I would take this opportunity to confirm that in the areas of lockdown of some kinds, there may be some wealthy people. *I would thank those affluent families who were able to respond that there is no need to accept state subsidies, both water and electricity bills, and other grants, to allow the state to use state subsidies for those poorer.* Some rich people spent millions of riel per month (on water/electricity). I hope that the

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wealthy in the lockdown area are happy to respond that they do not accept state subsidies because they can afford to pay for water, electricity and so on by themselves and can find their own rice and personal food already.

As in the case of the Vaccine assistance, a well-to-do people came to my Facebook page saying, "even though I did not contribute (to the budget to buy the vaccine), please let me pay for the vaccines for my family and people living with me". He did not contribute to purchasing vaccines, but he wanted to pay for the parts of vaccines he and his family needed to keep the vaccine for the poor. The government, however, cannot do that because of our policy to vaccinate people free of charge. I am hopeful that those wealthy people in the quarantine or lockdown areas will have a gesture to respond to the problem that is happening. ***There may be some philanthropists to make such contributions. If they choose to receive, they may use these subsidies to help their poor neighbors. Now is more than ever that we need to help each other.***

The Royal Government calls on Electricité du Cambodge (EDC) as well as the Water Supply Authority, Private Electricity Company, Private Water Company to join the Royal Government in helping the state in this supply arrangement for those whose family members have died, are Covid-19 positive, and those who are in quarantines. ***If they cannot respond to this call 100%, then there should be counterpart funds to contribute. For example, how much would the Royal Government pay for electricity, and how much would the electricity company pay? How much would the Royal Government pay for water? How much would the Water Supply Authority pay?*** We are to work together to solve this big problem in society. This must be something that we do not only in Phnom Penh, but also within the framework of the whole country. By doing this, those in quarantines and lockdown with strict measures and

cannot go anywhere will not be without food.

The day before, I saw that the district had not immediately taken (food aid) to the 16th village of Sangkat Tonle Bassac, Khan Chamkar Morn. I immediately got His Excellency Khuong Sreng (Phnom Penh Mayor) to transport rice and noodles to supply the local people. The next day to transport more and have money to go along. This morning, I asked His Excellency Khuong Sreng to rush deliveries to the lockdown areas ordered by the Phnom Penh Capital Hall last night. We must supply them today to solve the problem of sustaining the livelihood of the people in that area because they cannot go out for business as usual. If they cannot go out to do business, the only way is to give them 300,000 riel/family or about 70 USD, 25 kg of rice, a box of instant noodles plus 20 cans of canned fish. It was better than the wartime when we had nothing to eat then. In the time to come, they may also benefit from water and electricity bills covered by the state for two months. So these are what people in quarantine will receive ... of course, it cannot compensate for what they get on a daily basis (on their own), but it is a reduction of hardship and no one is left starving. ***This is the Royal Government's direct intervention using the national budget on families who member/s has passed away, Covid-19 positive, and in quarantine.***

Microfinance and Bank Association Thanked for Credit Restructuring in February 2021

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Cambodian Microfinance Association and the Banking Association of Cambodia for issuing a proclamation on April 7, which I would like to take this opportunity to comment and request on behalf of the debtors. Thank you so much for the credit restructuring. As of February 2021, they had restructured 340,000 people's credits with a total amount of more than four billion USD in loans. Now, the Microfinance Association and the Banking Association have

mentioned six important points that I would like to read and comment on as followed.

(1) For customers who caught Covid-19, (Microfinance Association and Banking Association), exempt them from interest payment and all fines for one month, while receiving automatic loan reorganization, if the customers agree. It also includes a three-month deferral of principal payments. All customers infected with Covid-19 must present a positive Covid-19 test result issued by the competent authority.

This point is good, but I am asking for persistent practice. If you can, please allow more time. For example, a one-month interest waiver, if extended to two months, would be good. This is my request. (I am proposing like this) because they are in bad situation with Covid-19 already, so some favor on reimbursement and penalties are necessary. Since our country is not a planned economy, we (the state) cannot force the private sector to accept our wishes. I would like to inform you that the number of people with Covid-19 is not too high to put the number of borrowers under pressure on banks or microfinance.

I clearly understand that banks or microfinances are both debtors and creditors. What is a debtor? The owner of the bank or microfinance is the debtor in that the creditor is the customer who deposits the money (and) receives the interest. For example, if 5% interest paid by creditors, i.e. customers deposited, so banks or microfinance owe it to them. This is called a debtor because you have to borrow the money of the customer who keeps it in the bank and have to repay the interest. It will then become a creditor by taking the money kept in the bank to lend to someone else at a higher interest rate. We do not allow banks to collapse. The 2008 economic and financial crisis began with the collapse of banks in some developed countries.

I would like to propose to the extent that it is relevant to workers who have lost their jobs and who are Covid-19 stricken. As of now, just one factory, up to

638 workers infected with Covid-19. This means that if these workers or their families have bank/s (or microfinances) debts, I am asking the banks/microfinances to give them understanding. Please study this issue directly with the customers to figure out whether to get a delay of repayments and/or all the fines and re-arrange the loan if a breadwinner of the family is in quarantine due to Covid-19.

(2) Customers/debtors in quarantines will automatically receive credit refinancing if the clients agrees, and that would include deferral of both principal and interest payments for one month, and exempt from all penalties

This is good for debtors in quarantine (for Covid-19) whose credits have been in reorganization for a one-month deferred principal and interest payments. However, I would seek consideration on further delays if possible, as this amount would not be beyond the capacity of the bank or microfinance institutions.

(3) Continue to provide credit restructuring quickly and conveniently for clients affected by Covid-19 disease

At this point, the impact is real. What I am asking for in the third point is to seek (the banks/microfinances) waiving off fines as stipulated in the old contract. The old contract was (written) in normal condition, but now we are under the circumstances of force majeure. (That is why I am) asking for no fines. During this period of the Covid-19, people are having hard times with Covid-19 already, to impose them additional fines is inappropriate. We need to help each other. These are our customers that we need to help each other. This is our client that we need to get a credit restructuring. (There have been) delays in payment (but we should) avoid fines. It is best to remove the clause on fine. However, we must see, not every customers suffer similarly. Some businesses turned out to be more lucrative than before the time of Covid-19. Although I am sure majority are already affected. I

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(Continued from page 3) suggest that fines should not be imposed in the Covid-19 time. Seizures should also not be made at this stage.

(4) Issue emergency or supplementary loans by easing the conditions and reducing interest rates to help continue and rehabilitate the family economy and business before and after the crisis

At this point, I want to talk a little bit to creditors. Who are they – creditors? As I mentioned earlier, creditors are the ones who put money in the bank to earn interest. For example, if the bank has a 5% interest rate to bind, 8% interest will set them 3% profit. To alleviate this difficult situation, the bank may ask to reduce the interest rate from 5% to 4% or 4.5%. That said, including creditors taking money to the bank to reduce profits, for example, 1 million USD used to have interest of 50,000 USD a year and tax deduction to \$ 45,000. Those with remaining money and put it in the bank for hundreds of millions, usually 20 million, 10 million, or 5 million, can reduce the profit they make from putting the money in the bank. Through the policy of the National Bank of Cambodia and the economic and financial policy, the interest rate is reduced and when such a reduction is made, the lending bank must reduce the interest rate on the borrowers.

It has a repercussion. The bank is both a creditor and a debtor. The possibility that can help the bank is those who put the money in the bank and they, during this difficult period, contribute to the reduction of interest rates. If the bank lowers interest rates, (I beg them) not to withdraw money from the bank. I am asking the banks to mediate with one another. Please do not run from one bank that lowers interest rates to another that refuses to lower interest rates. They should agree to decrease (the rates) altogether. I would like to ask the Banking Association to work together, and let the National Bank of Cambodia work with all banks so that one bank does not lower interest rates, while another bank raises it to raise

capital. If so, it is unfair. It may bleed one bank and run out of money. This is just my suggestion to customers who credited money to the banks. If from one million USD makes 50,000 USD per year, (one may accept to) reduce it to only \$ 40,000 or \$ 45,000. We call it “everyone contributes”. This is how to look at the whole forest, not just one tree. It is the connection from the capitalist to the bank, from the bank to the borrower, which can alleviate this situation.

We have used this the word “emergency” or “supplementary” by easing the conditions and lowering interest rates to help continue the economic recovery of households and businesses before and after the crisis ... in figures provided by the banks, there is a surplus of cash. Quite a lot. In fact, our banks have a lot of money that can be borrowed. These days, some banks are struggling because there are no borrowers. The money deposited are too much and the number of borrowers is small, making it difficult for the bank to have cash left over and responsible for paying interest to the depositors ... according to the figures, we have a large amount of credit available by each bank. Yesterday, I watched a running title of Fresh News that ABA Bank in 2020 made a profit of 150 million USD. Each bank is profitable. Can a bank reduce its profits to help its customers with additional debts? While, those who deposit money in the bank reduce their annual interest income. This is an important time for us to help each other.

(5) Reorganize credit and waive all fines for customers who buy their first home for living

On this point, I am very happy. Penalties for customers in the period when customers cannot get the same incomes as before Covid-19 is not a good method, nor is it a way to understand its customers. Of course, the original contract (obliged anyone) failing to pay, how much will be fined per day? Per month? It is always a binding obligation. Even if we borrow foreign money when we do not repay, they will fine us. In fact, Cambodia

got this fine punishment. After the 1991 agreement, many countries provided aid to Cambodia, but Cambodia did not receive a penny. They only helped to get the money back. Now the money owed by Lon Nol to the United States is being recalculated as a fine.

With ADB, it had taken us quite sometimes to resolve (resumption of loans). The SNC has given me the right to borrow money from a bank to repay the ADB just to get legitimacy to loan from the ADB. We cannot get credit from the IMF because we still owe the United States and Russia's debts. (We did not know how and where) Lon Nol take the money to and they forced us to pay. Hopefully, the administration of President Joe Biden will consider this. We did not know how Lon Nol used the loans. Perhaps, buy bombs and drop them all over Cambodia. The thing now is taking an ax and smashing our heads, and later demanding that we wipe the ax stained with our blood. Hopefully the administration of President Joe Biden will give this issue a consideration [...]

The Japanese attitude is very respectful. It was not until 2000 that we had the right to borrow Japanese money. Why? The reason is that we owe Japanese money both in principal and in interest. While owing the Japanese money, they could not lend more. (Due to this) Japan only provides grants but cannot provide us with loans. Japan has a way out. What is the Japanese method of resolving this stalemate? I would like to take this opportunity to present it to the monks and confirm to my compatriots.

Japan used a good method to help Cambodia. Japan provided goods to Cambodia in the form of fuel, zinc, and consumer goods for Cambodia to sell. The money earned from selling would pay back to Japan. Japan did not take it. Japan used that money to help Cambodia support the budget. It means taking Japanese money to pay Japan. Japan did not take it home. Japan used it to build more in Cambodia. Japan, however, did not give us cash. Japan provided

the materials that Cambodia must sell. Already sold, take this money to pay Japan. This was how Japan helped us.

We also wanted the United States and Russia to help us. They may cut out that much and use the amount left to help develop Cambodia, and how much does Cambodia have to pay? (The fact that am) raising (this because it) is no secret anymore. This has been a debate for a long time. I have a duty to explain to the people. When President (Barack) Obama came, we sat and talked, and I asked His Excellency President Obama to think about the percentage cut and the remaining percentage to provide as assistance to Cambodia. I had said it three times. His Excellency Obama answered three times that it is difficult to explain to the US Congress and Senate.

Finally, I was forced to say to President Obama, “I’m going to find it difficult to explain to the Cambodian people because, on the one hand, you must understand that the United States helped Lon Nol in a coup to overthrow Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk. Now his son is succeeding him [...] Second, how do I deal with my parliament? The problem is even more difficult, how do I solve it for the Cambodian people?” They bought bombs, dropped them on the heads of the Cambodian people and forced us to pay. His Excellency Obama said it was difficult to explain to the Senate, so I had to explain to him that it was even harder for me than for him.

It is true that I am talking about Covid-19, but there are examples in terms of fines. I suggest (that) in the Covid-19 period the word “fine” should not be used. Reduce interest, defer repayments and follow customer to fulfil their duties according their possibilities. Some customers may not be honest too. S/he can afford to pay, but s/he does not pay. S/he retains it to expand other businesses. It is not appropriate. They deserve to be fined because with stable income, but refused to pay (and they argue it

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was) for what the Prime Minister said.

(6) The Banking Association provides favors for customers who have died of Covid-19 according to the actual possibilities of each institution

This point is very good. The head of the household or the breadwinner in the family has died. The family's ability to repay is difficult. Therefore, it is good to reorganize the credit, somehow, to facilitate. I am very grateful for the release of this announcement. I suggest delaying repayments, lowering interest rates, and restructuring loans to ease difficulties. It is an appeal to all stakeholders ... because our brothers have money to deposit in the bank, take the interest, then reduce the profit a little so that the bank can reduce (interest on loans). (I am sure that the) banks can do that. As far as I know, banks can do it, but they should do it similarly together. If one bank lowers interest rates and another bank raises interest rates that would cause the interest-lowering banks to run out of capital. So let the National Bank work with the Banking Association. If it is 5% they decided to go down, let all the banks go down by 5%, [...] so the benefit will go to the customer who borrows.

Property Owners/Developers' Discounts at Government's Call

I would like to thank the Banking Association and the Micro-finance Association, and I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate and thank the participation of property owners and property developers at the call of the Royal Government to reduce prices. Renting a house, building and real estate, as well as selling discounts and facilitating, easing or favoring installments or paying interest on the purchase of houses and real estate to its clients in difficult situations due to the epidemic crisis. This is an engagement. I am looking for more participation that there should be no foreclosure at this stage, because in some places I hear that the promise of payment is not fulfilled, all the money paid is abandoned and the house

is confiscated. To do so is, if I may say, seems to have no tolerance for the situation at all. Instead, we need to help each other now. The tenants used to rent out and do good businesses, but now they do not.

We have closed traffic in the city at 8 pm. We cannot allow it anymore. People come and fill the shops. A woman commented and someone sent it to me saying, "Samdech, I wanted the curfew for another two years, because my husband came home early in the evening ...". When a husband left the house and you asked me to do this is not a good method. We wanted, however, to reduce the number of people who enjoyed spending time together at night. The recent spread (of Covid-19) was because we neglected to stop them from going from one place to another. In reviewing the causing factors, some children disobey their parents and went places at night, brought disease into the house, caused the death of the mother, the death of the father. We have to use this method. The mayor of Phnom Penh suggested that (we must ban) those who travel after 8 pm without a valid reason. We are not completely closed. There needs to have appropriate reason to travel at night, even if the block is closed. For example, you have to go to the doctor, take your wife, take the patient to the doctor, etc. For those who are out for fun, HE Khuong Sreng said to take to quarantine in Prek Pnov. I told them not to take it to Prek Pnov, just take the car and motorbike for 14 days and send him/her to home quarantine. Once they finished home quarantines, they can come take the car or motorcycle [...]

Urgent Assistance to Those in Lockdown Areas

(There are) many measures we need to take for this situation. The intervention part that I am talking about will be a relief. I would like to ask His Excellency Khuong Sreng to use all of the forces available at his disposal. Today, tens of thousands of families have entered the lockdown. We must urgently pack up rice, buy canned fish and distribute cash. People can buy

and sell in the area where they live in lockdown. They can trade in it. It is just that we do not let him come out to the outside market. So give them money. I ordered release of 5 billion riel for this process. We can go for more if it is not enough. It does not stretch beyond our ability to respond.

Interventions for economic and livelihood settlement of the people, for the families who have died of Covid-19, Covid-19 positive, and families of those in quarantines, I have already mentioned. Hope the municipal and provincial authorities receive this command and regulations to implement. I always send money to all provinces for quarantine work, and each person in quarantine received 20,000 riel per day. For those of you in lockdown quarantine, we provide a package of 300,000 riel [...]

Staying Home, No Wandering and No Gathering to Break Transmission Links

Now let me talk about measures. Why should the Royal Government take such action? As I have already informed, the February 20 event has grown to be severe for us. We have come to infection of hundreds of people a day. We do not know how far it will go. Previously, it broke out in Kandal province, and then in Sihanoukville, but now right in the center of Phnom Penh. Well, our answer is to find a way to cut off the transmission from one person to another by forcing them to stay home, not to wander around all the time, not to get together to eat and drink, or to get together like a wedding ceremony, housewarming, birthday party, etc. Authorities must not allow such rallies, as the contagion that has occurred in the past has come from parties where people got together [...]

K01 (social media person) said in his reportage (many things). Tell K01 to remove the video. If someone is stubborn, there is no choice. Yesterday I have one (arrested). What are you talking about is inciting and creating chaos. It is imprisonment as one has intended or sought to be ... K01's words are heavy, but I do not know if it is removed or the Minister of Information knew

about it. Go and see for yourself.

We cut off transmission from one person to another, from one province to another, and from one region to another ... while closing the 16th village in Tonle Bassac, we have to feed them, to help them. Now, those in lockdowns/quarantines exempted from water/electricity bills for up to two months, as the state pays to compensate to relieve hardships that they did not earn during the quarantine. All this is not how things are invisible to the Royal Government, nephew K01. They did not let you go live reporting about the building collapsed in Kampong Som was because your mouth is too bad.

Happy New Year at Homes

With only a few days left, we will pass from the year of rat, 2564 by Buddhist Calendar, into the year of ox, 2565 by the Buddhist Calendar. We will celebrate the New Year, but we will do it at home. It will be safe and happier to receive the Deities. Gather your brothers and sisters to worship at homes. New Year at home is more secure than gathering for New Year in a place where it can be risky. I will stay home. Those who work at my house – both the cooks and the domestic helpers, if they leave the house to the market, we will not let them come back. This TV group has to be thorough. The photographers had to sleep in the fort. We may trust the cook, but what about her husband, her child. This year, let us celebrate New Year at home [...] If they say Happy New Year in English, we answer "New Year at Home" and so on. Obviously I really have friends outside to wish me Happy New Year. I will reply "yes, New Year at Home" in English back to them because I work at home [...]

From Eating at Store to Takeout

I am asking people who used to go to the restaurant to eat, even if it is a family thing, do you trust that the restaurant is not contagious. Besides us, there are other entrants. Well, it is good to buy take away to take home and eat

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at home. I have a youngest daughter. He knows his father (is not going anywhere) and she knows how to cook food. She sent me some. The delivery stopped outside, and someone from inside had to go take it. Well, we endure a little hardship is better than no return at all. Once death comes, there was no time to return. When one is Covid-19 positive, what problems would it cause? Now, Covid-19 is not only attacking the elderly, it is also hitting children. So we must be vigilant. We should change from traveling to the store and eat there to order a takeout and eat at home instead. It is as delicious as we have it there. If the shop could not do business, they may close down for the time being. Some stores are still doing good business online. Therefore, it is desirable that those who deliver goods/foods online to be vaccinated because they have to bring their belongings from one place to another so that you are not infected. If you had to go to this/those store, immediately return home with the takeout. It also reduces the risk of infection. If we still wander around looking at pretty girls ..., a health problem would arise.

Sub-National Authority Thoroughly Monitors Cross-Provincial Travel Closures

Let all sub-national authorities thoroughly monitor the implementation of the cross-provincial travel closure, because according to the information, some people are hiding with the goods, because we still allow freight for economic flow reason. We heard that some hid in the goods. In case of arrest, they must get punishment for violating the rules. However, I would like to ask for an understanding for people with case of necessity. For example, in a province, the mother is in one village and the daughter is in another adjacent village. So we must facilitate them to pass. This is the flexibility of the territorial administration. Some of our villages are like that. One child is on this side, another is on that side, and their mother/father is on other side, so it is not right not to let them pass through.

Terminate or Renew Travel Ban Based on Actual Circumstances

We will see how this contagion go. The travel ban decision expired by April 20, and I will consider if it needs further delay. We have no way of knowing yet when Covid-19 subsides. Thailand has been fairing better for a while, now the infection has risen to hundreds in Bangkok. Of the three border countries, Laos is the best at managing with Covid-19. In the past, we were among those who managed well. Vietnam also had community infecting, while we were not infected in the larger community. Now our numbers are higher than those infections in Vietnam. Vietnam controlled the situation for a short time with thorough measures [...] Vietnam's stern action has brought some to say about violation of human rights. Vietnam may violate rights of one person that created trouble, but Vietnam has protected nearly 100 million people in its country. We commend the Lao and Vietnam authorities. We have also worked hard for more than a year without such an explosion. We commend, however, I do not blame anyone, because I said since the beginning that now is not the time to blame each other, it is time to fight Covid-19 together.

The Laboratory Must First Test Samples from High Risk Site

What happened in the past, the sample checking did not finish and left hundreds or thousands of samples untested. Samples that are at high risk area have not been tested first. I told the Ministry of Health to test every sample last night and hundreds of infected cases come out. Our strategy is to find quickly and manage to control quickly. If the laboratory leave samples from high risk area later, it would be until 1am or 2am to get the result. How many hours does it delay? All laboratories must get on to samples testing from high risk areas as first priority. Once we got the result quickly, we can act quickly to retrieve the patient. It could be that laboratories have not implemented situation-

al management strategies [...]

This is an experience. I do not blame anyone. Probably they do not know how to implement. I am a politician, not a technician, but I can understand. For example, if we find a patient at 12 noon, just two hours later we can take the patient to the hospital. Instead, we leave the sample at high risk area until 1am or 2am, so the patients have a whole day to mobilize freely and it is too late to transfer them to hospital. Therefore, let all laboratory and institutes test every samples as soon as possible and give priority to high-risk areas so that we can easily manage the situation in a timely manner. Now, wherever there is a small or large test site, it is necessary to strengthen the testing capacity. In the next few days, there will be new test kits in addition to the old ones, and some provinces have already prepared their own testing sites and so have the military hospitals [...]

Thoroughly Manage Quarantined Persons and Prosecute Perpetrators

One of the points that I would like to issue an absolute order is to check on those in quarantines, not to leave the quarantine facilities, and to enforce the law as necessary. I would like to request His Excellency Keut Rith, Minister of Justice, to work with the court to prosecute the perpetrators of quarantine measures. Please prepare PPEs as worn by the police and the military, for them to work with the accused with Covid-19. Well, our judge can wear protective gears, the person who is to be tried must also be in PPEs, the police can also wear it with their badge. Prosecution is necessary because this law came out for implementation. Although in the Covid-19 time, we have reduced the number of people working in the institution, but the trial of the perpetrators of the Covid-19 case must be happening. If we catch one at night, let us try him/her soon in the morning. I do not order the court, I order the Minister of Justice to work with the court because the Minister of Justice is a member of the Supreme Council of Judges. The Minister of Justice is a member

of the Royal Government. If violators of quarantines found to be Covid-19 positive, s/he must bear the punishment according to the law in place. Do not let them say that our law made only for threatening people [...]

Two High Schools, One Factory, Koh Pich Exhibitions Hall for Mild Covid-19 Patients

Another point I would like to make. Our doctors can no longer support it. In just two days, more than 1,000 people infected which surpassed the capacity of Luang Mae Hospital, the (former) InterContinental Hospital and overcrowded other hospitals. We started to plan home remedies. But home remedies must be done thoroughly. These cannot be (treated at home) are – first, ones with severe condition. They cannot be treated at home. They must be transported to the hospital. Second, the house is too small, lest they may transmit the disease to their children or spouses.

Now, because InterContinental Hospital, Luang Mae Hospital and other hospitals are full of people, we have set up two high schools and one factory both has nearly 2,000 beds. Last night, I asked Oknha Pung Kheav Se if it is possible to use the Koh Pich Exhibition Hall as a place to receive patients. He not only provide the exhibition hall, he also provides the wedding halls for that purpose. I immediately ordered my son and daughter-in-law to get down there. HE Khuong Sreng has organized two high schools. My son and daughter-in-law have arranged a factory which the private sector provided us. Now they are going down to prepare at Koh Pich. We can increase the capacity (to treat Covid-19 patients). However, the two high schools, Koh Pich halls, and the factory prepared will only host mild patients. Severe patients must be hospitalized with thorough medical follow-up [...]

... I told the army commander to release the army to help with the preparation process. The Ministry of Health must release the bed and organize a team of

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doctors. We set up like this to ensure that we have team of doctors available on duty. To set up sporadic locations, it would be impossible to do so. We need to prepare the place where the doctors are on duty thoroughly. This is the point we need to address. We work day and night. Let us release troops from the military barracks and the police to help. Phnom Penh is a high-risk area [...]

Please tell all provinces to expand the capacity of laboratories in their territories to do the testing process quickly since (we now have to transport the samples back to Phnom Penh to test). In some places where there is a few samples, they can be analyzed at the provincial level. We must find ways to expand our capacity, do not wait for the provision from the Ministry of Health. Where can we find it, take it. We have ordered quick test (equipment) from Thailand. Yesterday, reportedly, four hospitals in Thailand stopped accepting patients due to a lack of test equipment. We have not yet reached that point, just a slow test. We are now increasing the testing capacity and each province must have at least 50 beds ready for Covid-19 patients. Separately, Kampong Cham, I have already ordered. Kampong Cham Provincial Governor Un Chanda has already prepared Mekong hotel in addition to the (existing) one. We have prepared them for Kampong Cham itself, also for Tbong Khmum, but Tbong Khmum must also be prepared. Each province must have at least 50 (beds) ready and need to reserve more [...]

Nearly 1 Million Vaccinated, More Vaccine to Arrive

Last but not least, let me talk about vaccination. Our vaccination program has so far reached almost 1 million people. (Sorry! Let me take a look) in the army, we have jabbed 216,903 people, today we reach up to 220,000 people. In the civilian part, we have injected 678,000 people. Overall, we have injected almost 1 million people. Compared to other countries, the number of vaccinated Cambodians is also considered to be no lower than

anyone in the region. With a population of only 16 million, we have injected almost 1 million of population which is considered to be one of the fastest process.

According to the data, the number of vaccines we plan to receive this year is 20 million doses, but more than 11 million doses will be available this year. We have received more than two million doses (including) 1.3 million doses of Sinopharm, 1.5 million doses of Sinovac, more than 300,000 doses of AstraZeneca. So it is already more than 2 million, and on the 17th of April, another half a million doses will arrive. By May, another 1.5 million doses comes. By June, another three million doses arrives. By July another two million doses comes, and in August, we will have 1 million doses more. Our vaccines are good enough for injection.

Compulsory Vaccines for the Armed Forces and Civil Servants, Voluntary Vaccines for Citizens

These days, some blamed me for violating my duties and the principle of voluntary vaccination. I would like to clarify that as the head of the country's government, I have a duty to vaccinate the armed forces and all civil servants. For the people, it is a voluntary principle. When I was preparing the crematorium, some said that I despised the lives of the people. As you see, we have had so far 24 corpse already (of Covid-19). If I do not take a step ahead, what will happen? We would be missing our step. Remember, because Hun Sen went ahead of the situation like this, Hun Sen won you forever and will still beat you forever. If you only think of doing bad things, I will control the situation a step in advance [...]

I predict that the vaccine will go from voluntary to mandatory, and not just in Cambodia, but the rest of the world. Now Europe is preparing a so-called vaccine passport. Reciprocation will be possible. Now, with Thailand, we do not have a policy of reciprocation yet but an anti-Covid-19 vaccinated Cam-

bodian going there for medical reason, will not stay in 14 but only seven days quarantine. In the future, anyone without the vaccination will gain no permission to enter other countries.

A "Dictator" That Protects the People's Survivals

You do not come to talk like this person. He was arrested in Kampong Speu. People sent me just now. That has been since yesterday. He created (story) in Tik Tok about the vaccine ... If you talk too much, run fast. Do not say I am dictatorial. To govern the country, if not thoroughly, there is no need to rule. Even being a pagoda chief or a pagoda abbot must be ensuring disciplines. Human rights activists, I would like to say that you think of the rights of a person who speaks deceptively. But, I think of the millions of human rights they need to live. Which one do you take? Complain about me to The Hague and the International Criminal Court. Do as you please. I work for millions of Cambodians to live and catch the bad guys and imprison him. If you blamed me as a dictator, I got it. I would like to be called a dictator, but I have the advantage of protecting my people. Which one do you take? You stand by the right to freedom of expression and then died. You failed to express yourself and destroyed millions of people, which one do you choose? Those of you who are human rights activists, democrats, may think clearly [...]

Next, a QR code tracing will come. The Ministry of Posts is now working (to) track down those with Covid-19, those who have been infected, those who have been quarantined and those who have been vaccinated. In (other country) they can know, if a person is not vaccinated has entered their premises. Let's do another system. They have all been vaccinated [...] Even though you accuse me of being a dictator, I am willing to accept a (so-called) dictator, but I have worked for my nation to survive [...]

UNTAC, after spending two billion USD, left Cambodia with two territories. Win-win policy, I am the one who created it and

led it, achieved Cambodia as a country under one control, one king, one parliament, one constitution, one government, and one armed force. (You called) this is a dictator. I built (this country) from scratch, now there are these tall buildings. (You said, I am) a dictator. Dictatorship is not a bad thing (looking at all this). If I am not so serious, what will this country be like? This place where we are now, some even called for the US missile to strike since 1998, it must be remembered. I can catch some people who are disturbing, and for the freedom of 16 million people to live and be free, I am not afraid to dare to take responsibility.

Hun Sen Administration Lack No Money to Pay the Salaries of Civil Servants

The Royal Government is working hard. I think the cost of water, the cost of electricity, the cost of quarantine will cost millions of dollars, but it does not exceed our capacity. There are people who posted on Facebook that we wished to fire officials because of the lack of salary. That would happen in another life. In the past three months, please be informed that the tax revenue we received is nearly 600 million USD, and the customs received more than 200 million USD – a total of more than 800 million USD. During the first three months of 2021 tax and custom revenues is already more than 1 billion USD, would the Hun Sen administration lack money. I have the number in (my hand) here, we do not run out of money. You need to know that with the money we have, we will be able to pay the salary (for our civil servants and armed force) in the next 3 years [...] The Covid-19 vaccine will soon become common, and Sinopharm has a shelf life of three years or 36 months. Although we may not need it yet, we have it in stock. But stockpiling without sharing to other countries is very bad. We (respect) multilateralism. We inject diplomats in Phnom Penh (as well) [...] Do not say to me to mind own business first before minding other's. I do care about everyone, and I do not think like you [...] ■

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daily necessity, must continue to operate. We are willing to close garment factories, footwear factories and other factories, but we must allow operations of factories that produce food, such as a noodle, fish sauce and/or cattle/pig slaughterhouses. People must continue to sell their fishes in Phnom Penh and Takhmao.

Works/activities related to public services as defined by the institutions, such as fire-fighting services, electricity supply, clean water, solid waste collection and transportation services, etc. (will continue). So do not worry about electricity, clean water or garbage collection. They are still normal activities. Gasoline sales must also continue. What the daily needs of the people continue. Even the banks will be open to allow our people to withdraw cash. Online business, online supply is still allowed. Commodities, grocery stores, wholesalers, orderly grocery stores such as marts, restaurants, canteens selling packaged food, fuel, gas, or other daily necessities of the people continue to operate.

The supply of services on a daily basis includes emergency services, health services, pharmacies, post offices, telecommunications, banking and financial services, and daily necessities services with the permission of the competent authorities (will continue). However, we need to cut down number of staff. Hotel and guesthouse services also need to be operational ... Freight services are necessary to serve the geographical area in lockdown. General freight/transportation services in/out or through lockdown geographical areas to serve the socio-economic sectors of the country and other necessary trade, occupation or business activities will operate with the permission of the competent authority [...]

In the time to implement lockdown measures, prohibition are on gatherings or rallying, but gatherings or getting together of family or cohort members living in the same

residence or lodge, family reunions in the same residence, are not. Organizing funerals in accordance with competent authorities' instruction, rallying people, gathering of health workers to implement health measures, for example, testing for Covid-19 virus, Covid-19 vaccination, and gathering of health workers, emergency works, gatherings of competent authorities, commanding forces, all levels of administration, maintenance of security, order and public order (are all possible). What we need now is that you stay in the house while there is no need to go out, and if there is a need [...]

Only with everyone's participation (will bring us success). I call on the people not to panic with the situation as it happened this evening. If you have seen and studied the Royal Government's decision, you do not have to worry too much. **The text of the decision that I just signed a little earlier, covers everything, but I would like to emphasize that there will be no shortage of rice, no shortage of salt, no shortage of food supply for Phnom Penh.** Vegetables supply that used to come from Kandal province to Phnom Penh may continue to come in for distribution to provide for through the Committee that will organize and arrange it as time arrives/comes. Transporting pigs to the slaughterhouse, supplying meat to the city is still possible – a necessity in providing for livelihoods.

Of course, some activities must be closing at once, such as shops selling non-essential like clothing stores, etc., other than food. Now is the time to pause ... take a break and stay at home. We need to make sure sale of food to eat, clean water, orange juice or mineral water to drink, for fish, pork, beef, vegetables, etc. will stay. We encourage food production at this moment. May HE Khuong Sreng pay attention to the people in the poor areas and provide them with relief. His Excellency Aun Porn Moniroth reported to me that rice is ready. I beg those who sell rice do not take this time to increase the price. **I urge the Ministry of Commerce to bring rice into**

the market to avoid rice traders taking advantage of this opportunity. We needed to release (instant) noodles and other state-owned goods to ensure supply in the market and sell to the people at a reasonable price. We cannot let commodity prices go up arbitrarily. Please endure for 14 days so that we can cut off the transmission and please do not leave the house when it is not necessary. If necessary, you must take medical measures – wear a mask and keep a safe distance.

I urge you to be patient during this time. We suffer short-term pain better than long-term one. My family has to go to charity and also have to stop traveling and cannot leave home. I have already banned my children from leaving their homes. Some of my grandchildren took refuge with me in Takhmao, but they could not afford to leave. **This is a strict regulation. In case of necessity, our brothers and sisters can still go out, for example, to get vaccinated, go out for medical treatment, etc. You can still come out with clear specifications, and we will practice with firmness and flexibility.**

What I suggest is not just for Phnom Penh. **In the provinces now (there are) widespread and uncontrollable gatherings for eating and drinking. As for the drinking group, I would call on the whole country to stop selling alcohol to avoid eating and drinking.** In Phnom Penh, alcohol is not considered a type of food. Of course, wine or beer is considered a type of food. However, I would like to request that in Phnom Penh, suspend the sale of wine and beer for 14 days. Please sell orange juice, pure water, anything other than alcohol to our people.

I am calling on our people **to work together to end this dangerous event. We are on the brink of death. If we do not work together, we will eventually die. The only way (to avoid that) is with the cooperation of the state and the people, especially the support and participation of the people.** The state will continue to supplement through the leadership of the

commission, especially HE Aun Porn Moniroth, continue to review and propose adjustments and establishment of sub-committees (to look into relevant issues regarding) where to loosen and tighten. **Please submit (those) requests to me or the commission can sign it right away. I hope that we turn this time (that we are) at the brink of death into a new opportunity after the 14-day New Year to reduce (pandemic) transmission [...]**

The Ministry of Labor must clearly define which factories, and which factories to keep. What I want to emphasize is that food-related factories must operate, such as noodle factories or bakeries, and shops that sell this type of food, the authorities must monitor the sale ... (by) avoiding accumulation of buyers into crowds. We have to help with security gaps in places like AEON1 and AEON2 or orderly markets that we are still open. We needed to say that for the market capacity to allow 100 people in at once, we should only allow 50 people to enter at a time. We have to have our security along with the security of the store to ... to avoid the intrusion in the store that leads to the infections, thus to closure of the shops/stores themselves [...]

... I am deeply saddened that as I issued the order for this arrangement, an irresponsible person leaked it. This leak shocked the feelings of the people. That was contrary to my purpose and that of the Royal Government that make this lockdown decision. **(The state) has a proper supply arrangement so that you do not run out of food, do not run out of electricity.** Services, including litter collection, are still available. Even exercise can still be done, but it is good to exercise in the yard, and if there is no yard in the house, we can walk nearby the house ... Please pay attention to this issue and study the decision regarding the geographical lockdown of Phnom Penh and Takhmao city of Kandal province clearly to understand and all relevant authorities must be strict but gentle, and help serve our people ./■