

A human rights perspective on land grabbing: the case of Cambodia

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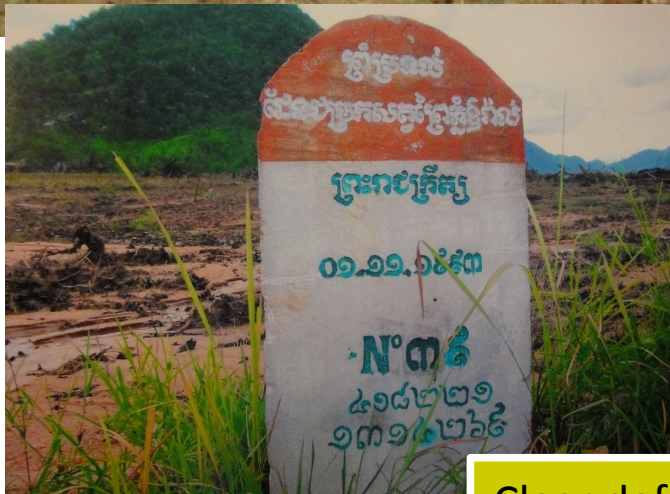
Kampong Speu

'Degraded forests' for 20.000 ha sugar cane plantation



A large yellow bulldozer is shown in the process of clearing a field of tall grass and brush. The machine is moving from left to right, leaving a path of cleared earth behind it. In the background, another bulldozer is visible, and the sky is overcast.

Bulldozers at work

A yellow Caterpillar bulldozer is shown clearing a path through a dense forest. The machine is moving from left to right, pushing aside trees and brush. The operator is visible in the cab.

Clear defined rights of communities are ignored



Fences and military protects the new operations



People are evicted and lose access to land



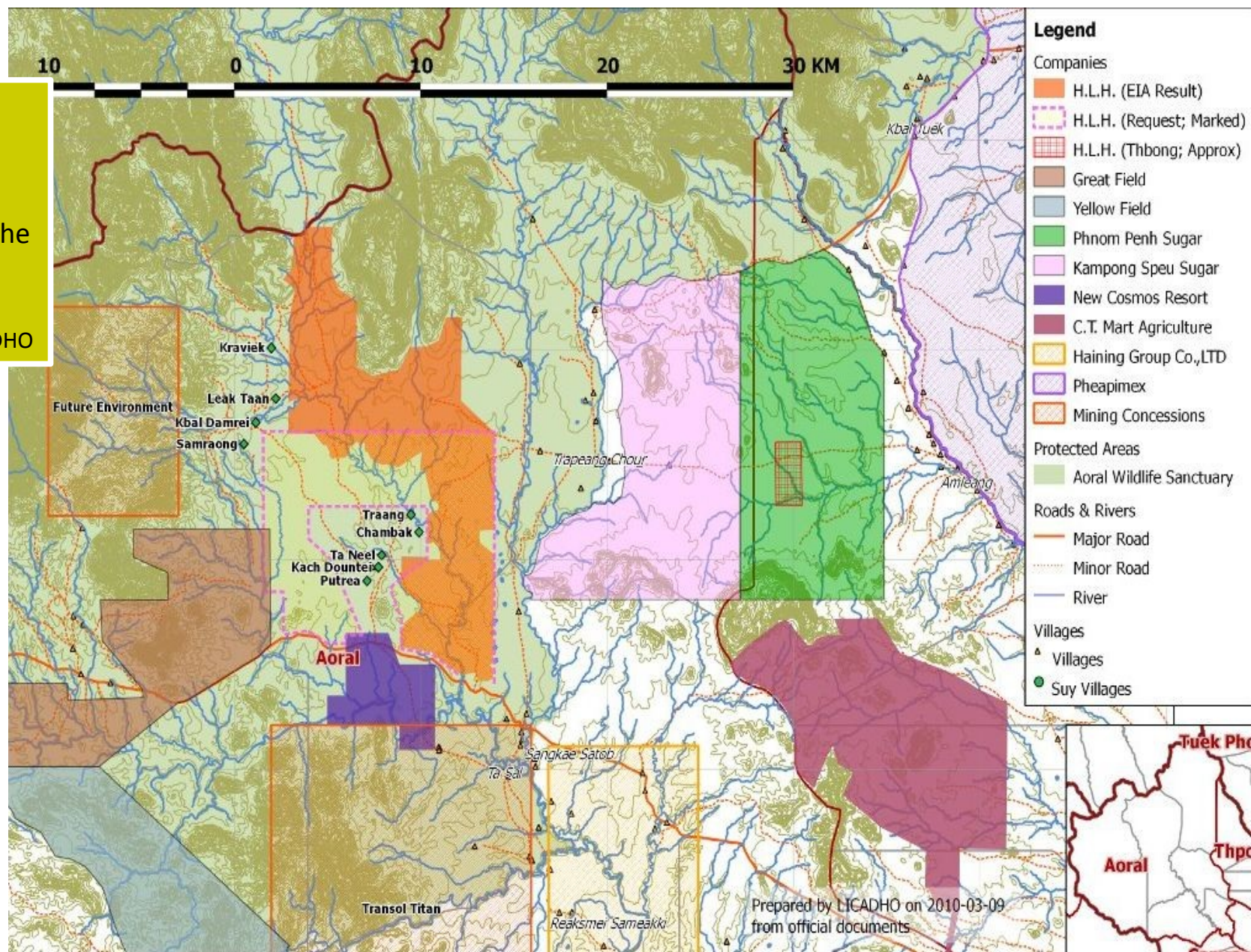
Community resistance



Concessions in northern Kampong Speu

Only small 'survival corridors' for the
rural population

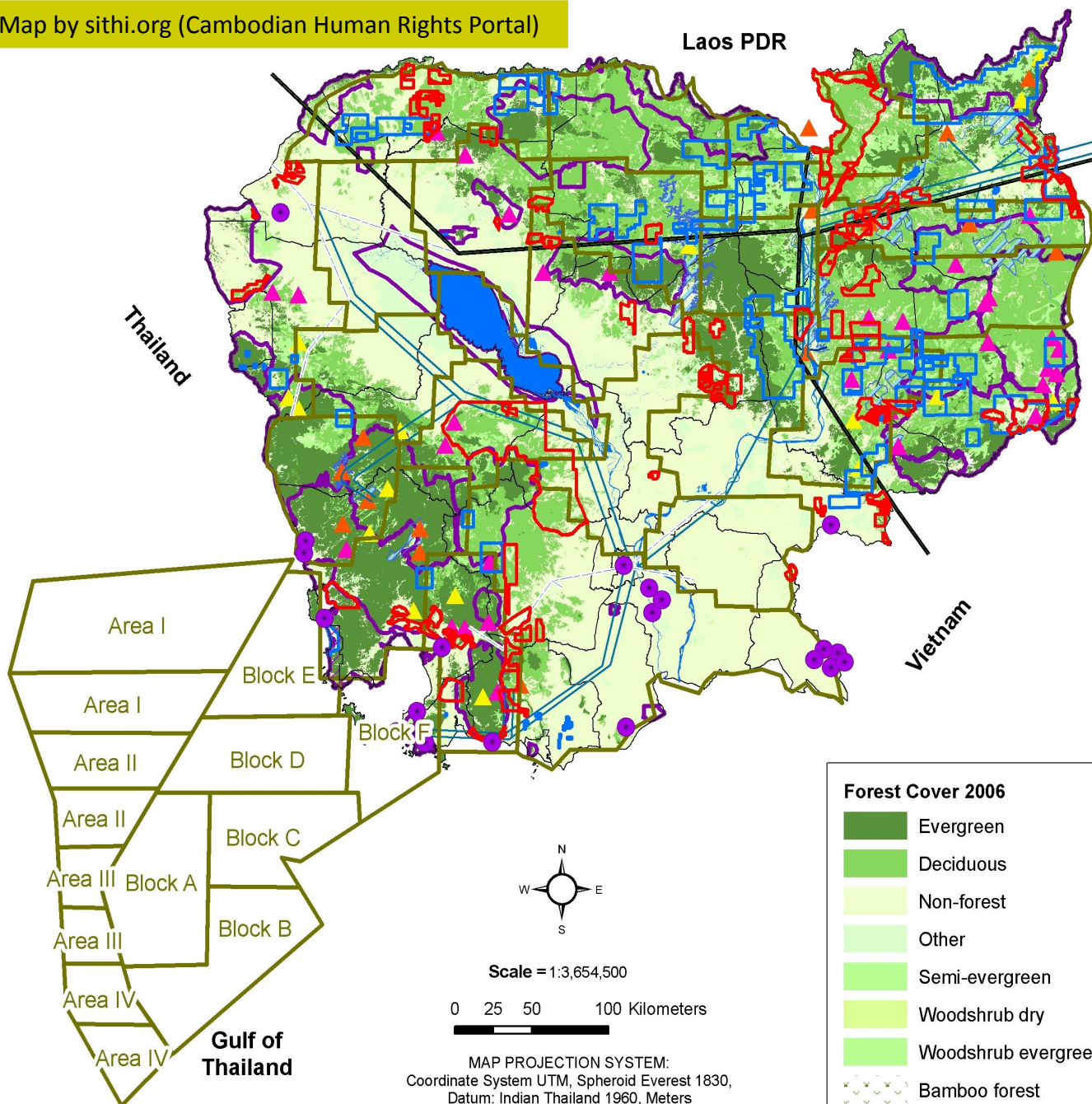
Map by LICADHO



Land grabbing: The case of Cambodia



Map by sithi.org (Cambodian Human Rights Portal)



Cambodia Location



The national scramble for land

Concessions and SEZ until mid-2009:
More than 3 Mio. ha
Total arable land 5,5 Mio ha

Legend

- Special Economic Zones
- Union Development Group
- Economic land Concession
- Mining Concession
- Oil and Gas Blocks
- Proposed 150Kw Line
- Transmission line 220Kw
- Transmission Line 150Kw
- Proposed Hydro > 50,000Kw
- Proposed Hydro > 1000Kw
- Proposed Hydro 500-1000Kw
- Hydropower Reservoirs
- Major rivers
- Protect areas
- Provincial boundaries



Complex land grab dynamics

1. Mix of **actors**: national elites (e.g. senators) and foreign companies;
2. Strong **trade** incentives for sugar cane production: development initiative of EU (Everything But Arms) part of the business model;
3. National **land policy** (support by int. development cooperation like GIZ):
 - Process of land titling (20% of the 'beneficiaries' have lost land);
 - Exclusion of 'contested land';
 - Weakening of existing rights (e.g. possession rights);
4. International **money** (investment funds) behind the active companies;

The case of DWS (Deutsche Bank Group):

- KSL acquired 20.000 ha land for sugar cane production in Koh Kong Province;
- 450 families lost access to land;
- in 2008 DWS was 5th largest shareholder of the Thai sugar company KSL;

Company	Country	Funds	Total investment (€ mln)
● Agroton Public	● Ukraine	● D, F	● 2.6
● Australian Agricultural Co (AAC)	● Australia	● D, F, G	● 14.2
● BrasilArgo	● Brazil	● D, F, G	● 12.5
● Bunge	● United States	● A, B, C, D, E, F, H	● 90.7
● China Forestry Holdings	● China	● F	● 2.0
● Cresud	● Argentina	● D, F, G	● 17.8
● Cosan	● Brazil	● A, H, G	● 9.7
● Khon Kaen Sugar Industry company	● Thailand	● D, F, G	● 10.9
● KTG Agrar	● Germany	● D, F	● 0.6
● Magindustries	● Canada	● D, F, G	● 6.3
● MCB Agricole Holdings	● Ukraine	● D, F, G	● 0.6
● Noble Group	● China	● D, G	● 15.3
● Olam International Ltd	● Singapore	● C, D, F, G	● 21.2
● Razgulay Group	● Russia	● D, F	● 10.6
● São Martinho SA	● Brazil	● D, F, G	● 21.4
● Sintal Agriculture Plc	● Ukraine	● D, F, G	● 3.5
● SLC Agricola SA	● Brazil	● D, F, G	● 45.7
● Syngenta AG	● Switzerland	● A, H, D, G	● 61.5
● Union Agriculture Group	● Uruguay	● D	● 2.2
● Wilmar International	● Singapore	● B	● 0.2

- Overall they invested at least 4,5 billion € in companies that acquire land;

Legitimative narrative (investors/ states):

- Marginal lands, degraded (=useless) forests
- Jobs, jobs, jobs...
- Infrastructure
- Economic development for the benefit of all

***„With the road came the bulldozers“
(Peasant in Kampong Speu)***

Reality check:

***„Today, when they talk about development, we have fear“
(Villager in Kampot)***

- Productive land, land highly relevant for local food security;
- No jobs:
 - Small number of workers needed (industrial farming);
 - Very low wages;
 - Seasonal/ precarious work;
- Infrastructure not for local needs
 - Export infrastructure (SEZs, ports, national roads...)
- Further marginalization of rural communities;

Human rights perspective

- **National law:**

- Concessions are highly contestable under national law (e.g. over half the concessions are above the legal size of 10.000 ha, World Bank 2005);
- Does not adequately cover rights to land of some local communities ('injust laws' form RtF perspective) ;

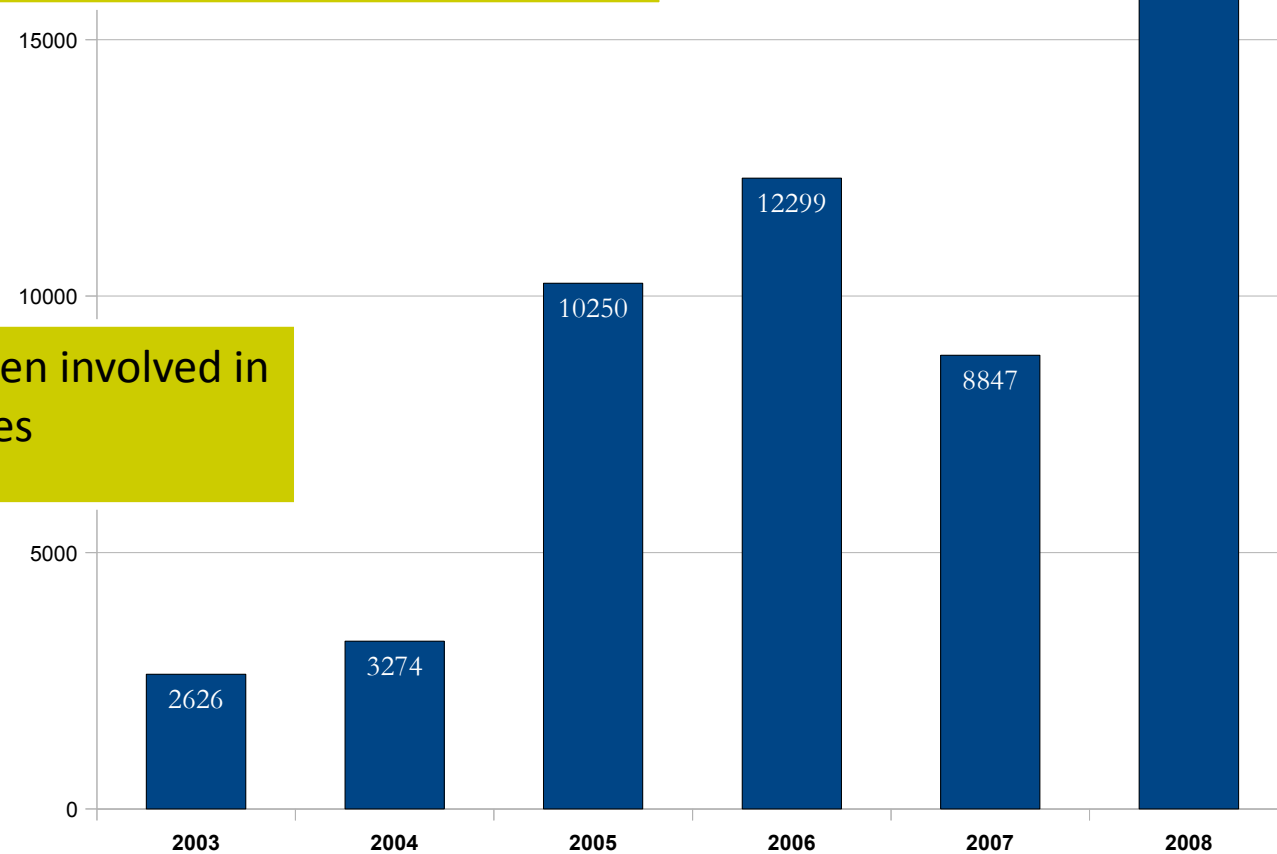
- **The right to food perspective:**

- Immediate and most concrete violations:
 - Forced eviction;
 - Loss of access to land (rice fields, forests, water, fishing grounds);

Escalating Land Conflicts

Land related human rights abuses in 13 provinces/
municipalities (number of families involved)

Source: LICADHO (2009) The Myth of Development



Some 250.000 people have been involved in
land conflicts in these provinces

- Structural aspects:

- Accelerated land concentration ('negative agrarian reform');
- Instead of empowering the peasants/ rural communities they are further marginalized;
- Who produces? Who benefits from production?
- The ability of the rural population to feed themselves is strongly reduced;
- The ability of states to provide access to land for a growing rural population as part of their state obligation becomes very limited;

In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

(Article 1 of both International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights)

Thank you

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