

Treasury Targets Corrupt Military Officials in Cambodia

November 10, 2021

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned two Cambodian government officials, **Chau Phirun (Chau)** and **Tea Vinh (Tea)**, for their roles in corruption in Cambodia. These individuals are designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13818, which builds upon and implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act and targets perpetrators of serious human rights abuse and corruption around the world. These designations are complemented by the U.S. Department of State’s announcement of visa restrictions under Section 7031(c) of the FY 2021 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act on **Chau** and **Tea**, and their eligible immediate family members, due to their involvement in significant corruption. Today’s actions demonstrate the U.S. government’s ongoing efforts to impose significant consequences on those engaged in corruption in Cambodia and globally. “The United States will not stand by while corrupt officials personally benefit at the expense of the Cambodian people,” said Office of Foreign Assets Control Director Andrea M. Gacki. “This Administration will continue to prioritize anti-corruption efforts and work tirelessly to promote accountability.”

CORRUPTION IN CAMBODIA

The United States has been long committed to combatting corruption and supporting the rule of law in Cambodia and globally. Recent developments in Cambodia, including growing systemic corruption, threaten both U.S. national security interests and the economic growth and prosperity of Cambodia and the region.

The two individuals designated today are members of the Cambodian Ministry of National Defense. **Chau** is the Director-General of the Defense Ministry’s Material and Technical Services Department. **Tea** is the Royal Cambodian Navy Commander. In 2020 and 2021, **Chau** conspired to profit from activities regarding the construction and updating of Ream Naval Base facilities. Additionally, **Chau, Tea**, and other Cambodian government officials likely

conspired to inflate the cost of facilities at Ream Naval Base and personally benefit from the proceeds. **Tea** and **Chau** planned to share funds skimmed from the Ream Naval Base project.

Chau and **Tea** are designated pursuant to E.O. 13818 for being foreign persons who are current or former government officials, or persons acting for or on behalf of such an official, who are responsible for or complicit in, or have directly or indirectly engaged in, corruption, including the misappropriation of state assets, the expropriation of private assets for personal gain, corruption related to government contracts or the extraction of natural resources, or bribery.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the persons above that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. Unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by OFAC, or otherwise exempt, OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all transactions by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of designated or otherwise blocked persons. The prohibitions include the making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any blocked person or the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person.

GLOBAL MAGNITSKY

Building upon the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, E.O. 13818 was issued on December 20, 2017, in recognition that the prevalence of human rights abuse and corruption that have their source, in whole or in substantial part, outside the United States, had reached such scope and gravity as to threaten the stability of international political and economic systems. Human rights abuse and corruption undermine the values that form an essential foundation of stable, secure, and functioning societies; have devastating impacts on individuals; weaken democratic institutions; degrade the rule of law; perpetuate violent conflicts; facilitate the activities of dangerous persons; and undermine economic markets. The United States seeks to impose tangible and significant consequences on those who commit serious human rights abuse or engage in corruption, as well as to protect the financial system of the United States from abuse by these same persons.

[Click here to view more information on today's designation.](#)

SECTION 7031(C) OF THE FY 2021 DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT

Section 7031(c) provides that, in cases where the Secretary of State has credible information that foreign officials have been involved in significant corruption or a gross violation of human rights, those individuals and their immediate family members are ineligible for entry into the United States. [Click here to view more information on the Section 7031\(c\) designations.](#)

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