Khim Sambo

**Background:** Khim Sambo was a journalist of Moneaseka Khmer, a daily, Khmer-language newspaper, aligned with the opposition Sam Rainsy party. He frequently wrote about allegations of government corruption cases, and was heavily critical of Hun Sen and the Cambodian People's Party ("CPP"). An analysis of Khim Sambo's reporting in the weeks before his murder, compiled by the Cambodian League for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights and reviewed by the Committee to Protect Journalists, found a steady stream of critical reporting on these subjects. Khim Sambo mostly wrote under the pseudonyms 'Srey Ka' or 'Den Sorin'.

One story in particular, which he wrote under the pseudonym of Srey Ka, has caught the attention of journalists and human rights activists who have studied the case. Less than two weeks before his murder, Khim Sambo wrote a detailed report about a “senior police official” who was not named but was easily identifiable to loyal readers of the newspaper. Khim Sambo's report describes the police officer as “one of the country’s most dangerous men,” and alleges that he went to a casino in Bavat, near the Vietnamese border, on the 25th of June 2008, lost all his money, used threats to obtain credit from the casino and arrested staff when they refused to lend him more.

On 8 June 2008, Moneakseka Khmer's editor-in-chief, Dam Sith, was arrested and detained on defamation and disinformation charges filed by Foreign Minister Hor Namhong for a story published in the newspaper quoting a speech by opposition politician Sam Rainsy that was highly critical of several government officials. He was discharged without bail on the 15th of June, after Hun Sen requested his temporary release while the trial was still pending, according to news reports that quoted the journalist's lawyer.

**Details of Incident:**
On the 11th of July 2008, in the proximity of the Olympic Stadium, Khim Sambo was shot twice while riding his motorcycle with his 21-year-old son, Khat Sarinpheata, who was also shot twice while cradling his dying father. The two gunmen, riding a motorcycle, approached Khim Sambo and his son from behind. Eyewitnesses reported that they didn't wear any
helmet, and made no attempt to disguise their identity. They used a K-49 pistol with a silencer.

Khim Sambo died immediately, whereas his son died in hospital the following day.

**Aftermath:**
Cambodian police officials said they had not identified a motive or suspects in the murder. The killings remain unpunished; no one has been held accountable for the murders despite national and international CSOs repeatedly called for the establishment of an independent commission of enquiry.

**Sources:**
- [http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic,463af2212,488edfb42,4880a46dc,0.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic,463af2212,488edfb42,4880a46dc,0.html)
- [http://deathpower.wordpress.com/2008/10/13/who-killed-khim-sambo/](http://deathpower.wordpress.com/2008/10/13/who-killed-khim-sambo/)