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## *Survivors Still Feel Effects of '97 Grenade Attack*

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"It still hurts, especially when it's cold," says opposition party Cabinet Chief Samrithy Doung Hak of the shrapnel still lodged in his bones.

A former reporter for the Asahi Shimbun newspaper, he was among those wounded in the March 1997 grenade attack on an opposition rally that left 15 dead and at least 150 injured. And he wonders why no one was charged for the crime, especially considering the curious circumstances that surround it.

"It was strange," he said of the rally preceding the attacks. "Normally there should be a large deployment of policemen. But this time it was just a few, very few.... They must have known in advance."

Other journalists injured in the 1997 attack voiced similar concerns about the lack of progress in the investigation on Thursday in the

wake of the Supreme Court's decision Wednesday to dismiss Sam Rainsy's case accusing Prime Minister Hun Sen of involvement in the attack.

Vong Sopheap, 34, a former reporter for Moneaksekar Khmer newspaper and now a reporter for Cambodia Today, remembers trying to escape—while bleeding from shrapnel wounds to his stomach and legs—from the park across from the National Assembly to Street 240, where his way was blocked by soldiers dressed in full combat uniform.

"They were dressed like paratroopers," he says, recalling the mesh combat helmet they wore. "With weapons readied like battlefield soldiers."

He said he believed the victims of the attack would not find justice as long as court officials are "controlled by powerful men."

A report by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation says then Brig-

adier General Huy Piseth identified the soldiers on duty that day "as members of the Cambodian People's Party." It also says the troops were "confirmed to be a detachment of Hun Sen's bodyguards."

Supreme Court officials on Wednesday said no one but Sam Rainsy's bodyguards had reported the presence of Hun Sen's bodyguards near the opposition rally.

Huy Piseth on Thursday declined to comment on the attacks.

Chan Momy, 36, an associate editor for Kampuchea Thmei Daily and former reporter for Cambodia Today, remembers the cries of the people around him and then people running over his body as they tried to flee.

He said he could not see them because a piece of shrapnel had lodged in his eye.

"I lost my eye for doing my job," he said of the wound he will always carry.