

# Evictees still awaiting Obama

**Khouth Sophak Chakrya**

AS MORE than 100 protesters continued to spend their days camped outside the US embassy appealing for the release of two land activists, a delegation from Amnesty International visited the Boeung Kak community yesterday to offer support for their fight.

More than 20 representatives of the human-rights organisation encouraged villagers to be patient in their struggle for human rights.

"Don't feel like this is hopeless and you are isolated," representative Amanda Howle said. "We [the international community] are aware and understand clearly that your human rights are being seriously abused."

Amnesty International would continue to monitor the case of Boeung Kak villager Yorm Bopha and Borei Keila's Tim Sakmony, Howle said.

The two women remain in pre-trial detention on charges the authorities say are not related to protesting, but which the pair's supporters say were fabricated to curb their activism.

"We're aware of this case and others," Howle said.

"If all they have been doing is protesting, the authorities must free them."

Protesters from Boeung Kak,



**Tim Sakmony, a housing-rights activist from the Borei Keila community, enters the Appeal Court in Phnom Penh earlier this month.** PHA LINA

Borei Keila and other communities yesterday sat on parkland outside the US embassy — a location where they have vowed to spend daylight hours until the arrival of US President Barack Obama for the ASEAN summit this weekend.

Boeung Kak representative Tep Vanny said she had filed a petition to the embassy urging Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to resolve land disputes across Cambodia.

Dr Pung Chhiv Kek, director of the rights group Licadho, said yesterday she had visited Bopha and Sakmony in Prey Sar prison. "They are so de-

pressed because of these unfair accusations," she said.

Residents of Por Sen Chey district's Choam Chao commune, where more than 100 families fear eviction before the ASEAN summit to make way for a security fence at nearby Phnom Penh International Airport, also protested yesterday.

"We're still worried that [the local authority] will come and tear down our houses without telling us," one said.

Resident Chray Nem said residents were living legally on their land and no one had a right to evict them. **ADDITIONAL**

REPORTING BY SEN DAVID ■