



**Cambodia**  
**Joint Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review**

**Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights,**  
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

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Founded in 1983, **The Advocates for Human Rights** (“The Advocates”) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publication. The Advocates is the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States. Since 1990, The Advocates has collaborated with the Cambodian diaspora in Minnesota on projects to promote human rights and accountability in Cambodia.

**The Committee for Paris Peace Accords on Cambodia, Minnesota, (CPPAC -MN)** is created to promote, monitor, and advocate for the successful implementation of the Agreements and the Declaration of the 1991 Paris Peace Accords on Cambodia.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Since Cambodia's third-cycle review by the Universal Periodic Review in 2019, the country's human rights situation has worsened significantly. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Hun Sen, his son Prime Minister Hun Manet, and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), the government continues to infringe on Cambodians' human rights and deny perceived opponents their rights to freedom of expression, opinion, association and assembly. The July 2018 elections included no organized opposition to challenge the CPP after a November 2017 Supreme Court decision dissolved the leading political opposition party, the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP).<sup>1</sup> The July 2023 national election, where the CPP won 120 of 125 seats, has been criticized as not being free and fair.<sup>2</sup> The government has also cracked down on the functions of human rights groups and independent media organizations, passing restrictive laws and issuing fabricated charges. In addition, detention conditions in the country remain dangerous as overcrowding, infrastructure problems, and lengthy pretrial detention are commonplace.<sup>3</sup>
2. This report examines Cambodia's violations of civil and political rights, including 1) implementation of recommendations to bring the constitutional and legislative framework into compliance with international norms; 2) protect human rights defenders and other civil society members; 3) freedom of opinion, expression, and association; and 4) right to participation in public affairs and right to vote.
3. The Advocates has received direct information about the human rights violations detailed in this stakeholder report from Cambodian civil society organizations, human rights defenders, and diaspora members in the United States. Credible information from secondary sources supplements their first-hand accounts. This stakeholder report addresses Cambodia's failure to comply with its international human rights obligations and makes recommendations to address and improve the human rights situation in Cambodia.

### I. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

#### **A12 Acceptance of international norms, A41 Constitutional and legislative framework**

##### **Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not Implemented**

4. In its third-cycle UPR, Cambodia accepted 11 recommendations to align its laws and policies with international obligations.<sup>4</sup> For example, Cambodia supported Denmark's recommendation to "Bring laws, regulations and policies on the freedom of expression, association, and public assembly into compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,"<sup>5</sup> as well as Iceland's recommendation to "Align laws, such as the law on associations and non-governmental organizations, the trade union law, the law on political parties and the telecommunications law, with international obligations."<sup>6</sup>
5. The government of Cambodia also noted 9 recommendations related to reforming its laws to comply with international obligations.<sup>7</sup> For example, Australia recommended that Cambodia "Repeal the two sets of amendments to the law on political parties, passed in 2017, and review the law on associations and non-governmental organizations and the trade

union law to ensure that all three laws are consistent with the State's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights".<sup>8</sup>

6. The 1993 Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia recognizes fundamental human rights, including: the right to political participation (Art. 35); the rights to strike and participate in peaceful demonstrations (Art. 37); the right to be free from physical abuse and arbitrary detention (Art. 38); the rights to freedom of expression, free press, and assembly (Art. 41); and the right to freedom of association and political party (Art 42).<sup>9</sup> The Constitution calls for legislation to give effect to these rights.<sup>10</sup> However, the rights to freedom of expression and assembly may be limited when they affect "national security."<sup>11</sup> This vaguely worded exception can constrain the exercise of both rights.
7. The 2009 Penal Code contains nine provisions that threaten the expressive rights of people in Cambodia.<sup>12</sup> These provisions criminalize public defamation (Article 305), public insult (Article 307), malicious denunciation (Article 311), incitement to commit a felony (Article 495), incitement to discriminate (Article 496), insult of a public official or holder of public office (Article 502), publication of comments intended to influence a court (Article 522), discrediting a judicial decision (Article 523), and false denunciation to judicial authority (Article 524).<sup>13</sup> The 2009 Penal Code also uses vague terms to describe offenses' elements, such as "serious turmoil in society" (Article 495),<sup>14</sup> "dignity of a person" (Article 502),<sup>15</sup> or "endanger Cambodian institutions" (Article 523).<sup>16</sup> These vague terms threaten the rights to freedom of expression, as the government can use them as a pretext to prosecute the legitimate exercise of freedom of speech.
8. The 1995 Law on the Press prohibits the press from publishing or reproducing "false information that humiliates or contempts national institutions" (Article 13).<sup>17</sup> While there are reports of an upcoming update, it is unclear when the law will be published and what it will contain.
9. Since Cambodia's last UPR, the government has continued to pass legislation and amend laws that contain provisions restricting freedom of expression. Non-governmental organizations and civil society groups are prohibited from criticizing political parties during the election campaign period and barred from participating in the process of national and local elections.<sup>18</sup> In 2016, the government passed the Law on Telecommunications, which authorizes government monitoring of telecommunications without the consent of communicators. Specifically, the law includes penalties of up to 15 years in prison for the use of telecommunications equipment to cause "national insecurity."<sup>19</sup> According to the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO), the government has used the law to restrict political freedom by, for example, arresting perceived opposition members for their online expression.<sup>20</sup>
10. On 14 February 2018, the National Assembly approved draft amendments to the Constitution.<sup>21</sup> Five proposed amendments affect Article 34 (enabling suspensions or withholding of the right to vote), Article 42 (limiting the right to freedom of association by requiring political parties to "put the interest of the nation first"), Article 49 (restricting freedom of association and other political rights by prohibiting people from engaging in "any activities" that directly or indirectly "affect the interests" of Cambodia or its citizens),

Article 53 (prohibiting “any form” of foreign interference in internal affairs in Cambodia), and Article 118 (removing secretaries of states from the Council of Ministers (Article 118)).<sup>22</sup>

11. The National Assembly also amended the Penal Code in 2018 that made “insulting the King” (also known as lèse-majesté) a new crime, punished by up to 5-year imprisonment and a fine of up to US\$2,500 for individuals, and \$12,500 for legal entities (Article 437).<sup>23</sup>
12. Because these amendments are vague, the government could use them to justify “wide-ranging sanctions” punishing the legitimate exercise of fundamental political rights.<sup>24</sup>
13. In 2021, Cambodia’s government issued sub-decree No. 23 on the establishment of the National Internet Gateway, which aims to regulate and oversee internet traffic, with the proclaimed objectives of increasing revenue, maintaining national security, and preserving tradition and social values. The operator of this gateway will work in collaboration with authorities to implement “measures to prevent and disconnect all network connections that affect national income, security, social order, morality, culture, traditions and customs.” This expansive internet gateway has raised concerns about restrictions on democratic freedoms.<sup>25</sup>
14. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Cambodia (OHCHR Cambodia) expressed concern over Article 6 of the sub-decree, which allows the gateway to block content impacting “national revenue, safety, social order, dignity, culture, traditions and customs,” Article 14, which authorizes internet service providers to track IP addresses and report the information to Cambodia’s Ministry of Post and Communications, and Article 16, which suspends operation for internet service providers who do not abide by the measures in the sub-decree.<sup>26</sup>
15. The Cambodian Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MPTC) in 2022 drafted a new cybersecurity law which would expand the government’s jurisdiction over investigating “cybersecurity incidents,” allow government officials to seize company computer systems, and prosecute noncompliance. Violations of this draft law could result in an up to \$37000 fine.<sup>27</sup>
16. In March of 2021, the Cambodian government passed the COVID-19 law, which imposes up to three years of prison for individuals violating quarantine guidelines and up to 20 years for groups intentionally spreading the virus.<sup>28</sup> Article 5 of the COVID-19 law permitted authorities to suspend or revoke business licenses and shut down businesses in the case of noncompliance with “health, administrative, and other measures” outlined in Articles 3 and 4. Although this law was revoked at the end of July 2022,<sup>29</sup> numerous journalists and demonstrators were arrested for allegedly obstructing the COVID-19 law while it was in effect.<sup>30</sup>
17. After several years of delaying the adoption of the Law on Associations and Non-governmental Organisations (LANGO), in 2015 the Cambodian government enacted the law to restrict the activities of civil society organizations engaging in human rights work. The Law specifically contains a provision that requires domestic and foreign non-governmental organizations to maintain their “neutrality” toward political parties in Cambodia.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the law’s vaguely worded guidelines leave many Cambodian organizations unsure how to comply with the law and avoid arbitrary shut-down by the

state.<sup>32</sup> As of the date of publication of this report, NGOs are still required to report annual finances and activities to the government under LANGO.<sup>33</sup>

**A61 Cooperation with civil society, H1 Human rights defenders,  
D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, D26 Conditions of  
detention, D33 Arbitrary arrest and detention**

**Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not Implemented**

18. In the third-cycle UPR, Cambodia accepted 8 recommendations and noted one recommendation to revise the law on associations and non-governmental organizations and to respect the operations of civil society. For example, Cambodia supported a recommendation from France to “[t]ake the necessary measures to re-establish an environment respectful of the rights of the civil society, in particular by revising the law on associations and non-governmental organizations.”<sup>34</sup>
19. Since the 2018 elections, the government has continued to arrest and detain human rights defenders.<sup>35</sup> Rong Chhun was arrested on July 31, 2020 after taking up the case of farmers in Tbong Khmom province who had their land taken in connection with a border demarcation between Cambodia and Vietnam. Subsequently, several other human rights defenders who demonstrated against his detention were also arrested and detained.<sup>36</sup>
20. Members of Cambodian civil society who are outside of the country have expressed to The Advocates their fear of arrest upon returning to Cambodia.<sup>37</sup>
21. The Special Rapporteur on Cambodia notes that government officials have restricted the right to peaceful assembly, in particular refusing groups’ the permission to organize gatherings or marches in public areas on public holidays such as International Women’s Day and International Human Rights Day.<sup>38</sup> Local officials told the Special Rapporteur that the permissions were denied because they would affect traffic, yet the Law on Peaceful Demonstration states that the risk of a traffic jam does not necessarily cause a risk to safety, security, or public order.
22. In November of 2018, the Cambodian government repealed Notice No. 175 on Associations, which had required nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to report planned activities to the police at least three days before conducting them. Prior to the repeal of Notice No. 175, authorities used it to prevent NGOs from organizing private human rights meetings or events.<sup>39</sup> The government has also broken up meetings and trainings it viewed as hostile to the government.
23. According to a survey by the Fundamental Freedoms Monitoring Project released in July 2020, only 40 percent of those surveyed said they felt they could peacefully assemble, down from 65 percent in 2016.<sup>40</sup> Out of the 411 assemblies recorded between April 2018 and March 2019, authorities interfered with 113 assemblies and prohibited 22 assemblies.<sup>41</sup>

24. A local NGO also noted 333 violations of the freedom of association between April 2019 and March 2020.<sup>42</sup> Victims included NGOs, members of the former opposition party, informal community groups, and workers' unions.
25. The Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitoring Project reported that a large number of government restrictions on and violations of freedom of association were related to surveillance of civil society organizations, leading to civil society leaders increasing security to reduce monitoring concerns.<sup>43</sup>
26. According to the sister of Khmer Thavrak activist Eng Malai, two Khmer Thavrak activists, including Eng Malai, were beaten by fellow prisoners while at Prey Sar's Correctional Center in December 2020. The appeal court rejected requests for appeal from Eng Malai and four other activists, including Khmer Thavrak activists Koeut Saray and Tha Lavy, and Khmer Student Intelligent League Association members Mean Prummony and MOUNG Sopheak. The Cambodia Prisons Department has denied the accusation.<sup>44</sup> Khmer Thavrak is a youth advocacy group in Cambodia centered on environmental issues in the country.<sup>45</sup>
27. During a demonstration in front of the Phnom Penh Municipal Court in July 2020, members of the Friday Women of Cambodia were attacked by security officials, who are shown on footage dragging the demonstrators and pushing them down.<sup>46</sup> Members of the Friday Women, a group protesting against the jailing of their relatives involved in the former opposition party, have reported being surveilled by authorities and facing excessive police violence.<sup>47</sup>
28. In September 2021, the OHCHR published a press release calling for the release of a 17-year-old minor with autism from detention. He is the son of a former opposition official and human rights defender and was arrested without a warrant. The minor was charged with incitement and insulting public officials in relation to his online actions. Authorities denied him bail and family visitation rights, and he was interrogated without a lawyer present. Cambodia has been a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities since 2012.<sup>48</sup>
29. The OHCHR recorded 4,323 accounts of arbitrary detention relating to strikes under the COVID-19 law, with the majority of detainees being women.<sup>49</sup> The law has been used for the arrest of strikers, journalists, and human rights defenders.<sup>50</sup>

#### **D43 Freedom of opinion and expression, D45 Freedom of association**

#### **Status of Implementation: [Not Accepted,] [Not / Partially / Fully] Implemented**

30. In its third-cycle UPR, Cambodia supported 17 and noted 5 recommendations pertaining to the freedom of opinion, expression, association, and assembly. The noted recommendations called for the government to release individuals detained on account of exercising freedom of expression, revoke trade union requirements that restricted these freedoms, and ceasing to use legal methods to interfere with journalists and media outlets.<sup>51</sup>

31. Cambodia diaspora members report that the Cambodian government has universally employed coercive tactics to silence public dissent. The independent newspapers, The Cambodia Daily and the Phnom Penh Post were both silenced in their reporting of government corruption, the former due to unsubstantiated tax charges, and the latter due to its sale to an investor with ties to Sen. The government has also closed an opposition-aligned radio station as well as those broadcasting Voice of America and Voice of Democracy content, also alleging tax evasion and rules violations. Journalists who criticize the regime and report news about the opposition have been arrested and charged with incitement and national security and pornography crimes. In 2021, a ban was implemented on recording police interactions. Users of social media who criticize the regime have been targeted, even those living outside Cambodia. Additionally, the enactment of a pandemic emergency law has given the regime complete control over the media, including reporting of news and surveillance of telecommunications.<sup>52</sup>
32. In August of 2023, the Cambodian government blocked access to the independent media outlets Radio Free Asia (RFA), Kamnotra, and The Cambodia Daily. This order requires internet service providers in the country to block the media outlets' websites and social media accounts and follows a July 2023 directive ordering all media sites the Department of Information and Audiovisual judges to be “[disseminating] misleading news affecting the honor and reputation of the Royal Government and that fail to comply with the requirements ... [of] the Ministry of Information.”<sup>53</sup>
33. In January 2021, the government announced a ban on livestreaming, filming, or otherwise recording police actions.<sup>54</sup> The government has also targeted users of social media, including those outside of Cambodia.<sup>55</sup> In August 2021, the government sent representatives to Bangkok to ask the Thai government to stop members of the Cambodian opposition living in Thailand from making critical social media posts.<sup>56</sup>
34. In 2021, Cambodia's Information Ministry Director-general of Information and Broadcasting Phos Sovann stated that the government detected 1343 cases of fake news, incitement, or insults on Facebook in 2020. Some cases were reported to Facebook and to the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications. The Information Ministry expanded its surveillance of social media platforms to closed-source platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Messenger, and included TikTok to its open-source platform monitoring list.<sup>57</sup>
35. Under the COVID-19 Law, the Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitoring Project documented 140 restrictions on freedom of expression, with 96 of those restrictions assessed as violations, including “threats against journalists, individuals facing criminal sanctions for criticizing the RGC's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and banners being confiscated by authorities during protests.”<sup>58</sup> The government also employed methods of legal retaliation through issuing Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP). FFMP reports that 132 SLAPPs were suspected to be issued against 379 individuals between the beginning of April 2019 and the end of March 2020.<sup>59</sup>
36. In September 2021, the Cambodian government sentenced Youn Chhiv, owner of the Koh Kong Hot News website, to one year in prison and fined him 2 million riel (\$500) for his

Facebook posts reporting on the evictions of residents in Botum Sakor National Park.<sup>60</sup> Chhiv was made to write an apology to Koh Kong deputy provincial governor Sok Sothy, who had filed a defamation complaint on account of the posts.<sup>61</sup> He was indicted under articles 494 and 495 of the Cambodian Criminal Code, and a statement by Cambodian human rights NGO LICADHO states that Chhiv was sentenced without an investigation under 72 hours after being detained.<sup>62</sup>

37. In July 2021, journalist Kao Piseth, a news correspondent for Siem Reap Tannhektar, was arrested in Battambang on account of incitement under article 495 of the Criminal Code and obstructing an enforcement measure under article 11 of the COVID-19 law. Piseth was detained after questioning the government's decision to use China manufactured Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines and was prevented from seeing a lawyer while detained.<sup>63</sup> The Battambang Provincial Court sentenced Piseth to two years to prison and fined him 3 million riel (USD \$750) in December 2021, and the Battambang Appeal Court upheld the ruling in July 2022.<sup>64</sup>
38. Ros Sokhet, a journalist and founder of the independent news outlet *Khmer Nation*, was charged in June of 2020 with "incitement to commit a felony" under article 494 and 495 of the Criminal Code. Sokhet raised concerns in two Facebook posts about Prime Minister Hun Sen's decision to name his son Hun Manet as his successor and brought attention to the lack of a government program addressing widespread debt issues as a result of the pandemic. On the same day that Sokhet was transferred to pre-trial detention, an official for the information ministry announced that the ministry would be reevaluating *Khmer Nation*'s licensing.<sup>65</sup> Sokhet was convicted in November 2020 and sentenced to 18 months in prison.<sup>66</sup>
39. Government officials have restricted the right to peacefully assembly on some public holidays, as well as preventing NGOs from organizing private events they view as hostile. Five Cambodian NGO's human rights defenders were jailed for a year under the pretext of bribery. They still await trial on fabricated charges that have been condemned by many human rights organizations, including the United Nations. Tep Vanney, a well-known land rights activist, along with other human rights defenders, had their unjust prison sentences upheld by the Supreme Court, an example of the compromised justice system supporting the regime.<sup>67</sup>

## **D7 Right to participation in public affairs and right to vote**

### **Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not Implemented**

40. In its third-cycle UPR, Cambodia supported 7 and noted 6 recommendations pertaining to the right to participation in public affairs and right to vote. The noted recommendations called for the government to release individuals detained on account of exercising freedom of expression, revoke trade union requirements that restricted these freedoms, and ceasing to use legal methods to interfere with journalists and media outlets.<sup>68</sup>
41. One of the most troubling developments in Cambodia's recent history is the alleged suppression of the right of Cambodian citizens to vote, the lack of free and fair elections,



and the November 2017 Supreme Court decision to dissolve the leading opposition party, the CNRP. By eliminating the most viable challenge to Hun Sen’s party in the July 2018 elections, the decision cements indefinite single-party rule for the CNP.<sup>69</sup>

42. Ahead of the July 2023 elections, Cambodia’s top opposition party, The Candlelight Party, was barred from participation on account of a paperwork issue, leading to the Cambodia People’s Party securing 120 out of 125 parliamentary seats. The National Election Committee website did not display specific results, and former prime minister Hun Sen threatened voters who recorded themselves spoiling the ballot in protest of the one-sided elections with legal consequences.<sup>70</sup>
43. The Special Rapporteur on Cambodia has reported that “...the human rights situation in Cambodia remains dominated by the repression of political rights.”<sup>71</sup> Dozens of former CNRP members have fled the country, and one of its co-founders, Kem Sokha, was sentenced to 27 years of house arrest in March 2023 on a charge of treason.<sup>72</sup> The CNRP’s former acting President Sam Rainsy has been charged under the lèse-majesté provision of the Criminal Code. Numerous human rights organizations and governments consider the charges against both leaders to be politically motivated.<sup>73</sup> The Special Rapporteur on Cambodia has also reported receiving “information on actions taken by the police or the courts against over 140 former members and elected officials of the party at the subnational level.”<sup>74</sup>
44. On July 10, 2016, political commentator Kem Ley was shot and killed at a petrol station where he regularly interviewed Cambodians about their political views. Ley was known for vocalizing his criticisms of the government as a prominent political commentator. Cambodian officials have not conducted a thorough investigation of the murder and who ordered it.<sup>75</sup>
45. The Advocates and CPPAC-MN have received reports from people affiliated with the CNRP who are abroad that they fear that they will be targeted for violence and arrest if they return to Cambodia. One CNRP member said that when he returned to Cambodia, he was attacked in front of the National Assembly building and beaten up by multiple men, while nearby police failed to intervene.<sup>76</sup> Threats have also been made against family members of diaspora activists who remain in Cambodia.<sup>77</sup>

## **II. RECOMMENDATIONS**

34. This stakeholder report suggests the following recommendations for the Government of Cambodia:
  - Protect civil society organization, human rights defenders, journalists, and opposition-party members, from harassment and arbitrary arrest by adopting legislative measures that prevent the harassment of such persons while exercising their rights to expression and association.
  - Thoroughly and impartially investigate and prosecute crimes committed against representatives of civil society organizations and human rights defenders, as well as opposition members and journalists, and hold offenders accountable.

- Take necessary measures to ensure a free and independent media, including through the revocation of Article 13 of the Press Law and article 305 of the Penal Code.
- Take the necessary steps to repeal or amend all laws that limit the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression, assembly, and association, bringing Cambodia's domestic laws into full compliance with international human rights standards.
- Take concrete action to ensure that conditions of arrest and pretrial detention meet international standards, including by reducing the length of time detainees spend in pretrial detention.
- Bring conditions of detention into compliance with the Nelson Mandela Rules, particularly with respect to air-quality standards, access to water, and access to electricity.
- Commit to a free and open political environment so that all eligible voters can exercise their right to vote and political parties can legally campaign and participate in elections.

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Cambodia: Supreme Court Dissolves Democracy*, Nov. 17, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/17/cambodia-supreme-court-dissolves-democracy> (last visited 11 July 2018).

<sup>2</sup>UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Cambodia: UN Human Rights Chief regrets elections held in restrictive environment*, 26 July 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/07/cambodia-un-human-rights-chief-regrets-elections-held-restrictive> (last visited 10 October 2023). LeMonde with AP, *Elections in Cambodia were 'neither free nor fair,' US announces punitive measure*, 25 July 2023, [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/07/25/elections-in-cambodia-were-neither-free-nor-fair-us-announces-punitive-measures\\_6065868\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/07/25/elections-in-cambodia-were-neither-free-nor-fair-us-announces-punitive-measures_6065868_4.html) (last visited 10 October 2023).

<sup>3</sup> UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia*, July 27, 2017, A/HRC/36/61, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/59b811ce4.html> (last visited 10 July 2018).

<sup>4</sup> UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cambodia*, (5 April 2019), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/41/17. ¶ 110.12 Amend the law on associations and non-governmental organizations to bring it into line with the State's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Greece); ¶ 110.14 Implement fully the recommendations made in the latest report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, including the addendum thereto (A/HRC/39/73/Add.1) (New Zealand); ¶ 110.25 In consultation with affected stakeholders and civil society, amend the law on political parties and the law on associations and non-governmental organizations to bring them into line with international human rights obligations (Germany); ¶ 110.26 Align laws, such as the law on associations and non-governmental organizations, the trade union law, the law on political parties and the telecommunications law, with international obligations (Iceland); ¶ 110.27 Amend the law on political parties, the trade union Law and the law on associations and non-governmental organizations to bring them into line with the State's international human rights obligations, in consultation with affected stakeholders and civil society (New Zealand); ¶ 110.28 Protect non-governmental organizations and associations, and ensure that the administrative provisions of the law on associations and non-governmental organizations are not used to close down, suspend or otherwise negatively affect non-governmental organizations and associations (Slovenia); ¶ 110.81 Guarantee freedom of expression for all citizens and journalists, including on the Internet, by revising the latest constitutional amendment and the interministerial instruction of May 2018 allowing surveillance of Internet contents (France); ¶ 110.102 Strengthen democratic participation by guaranteeing the independence of the media and establishing a safe and enabling environment for civil society and trade unions, and by fostering the full participation of opposition parties in the next communal, senatorial and legislative elections (Canada); ¶ 110.105 Bring laws, regulations and policies on the freedom of expression, association and public assembly into compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Denmark); ¶ 110.109 Cease

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all kinds of harassment of and arbitrary interference with the political opposition, human rights defenders and labour activists, and amend laws and regulations effectively used to limit freedom of association and assembly, such as certain provisions in the law on political parties, the law on associations and non-governmental organizations and the law on trade unions (Finland); and ¶ 110.110 Ensure a free civic space, allowing human rights defenders and journalists to freely express themselves both offline and online, without fear of harassment or reprisal, and refrain from prosecuting persons for exercising their fundamental rights under the Criminal Code and the law on telecommunications (Netherlands).

<sup>5</sup> UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cambodia*, (5 April 2019), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/41/17. ¶ 110.105.

<sup>6</sup> UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cambodia*, (5 April 2019), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/41/17. ¶ 110.26.

<sup>7</sup> UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cambodia*, (5 April 2019), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/41/17. ¶ 110.30 Repeal the two sets of amendments to the law on political parties, passed in 2017, and review the law on associations and non-governmental organizations and the trade union law to ensure that all three laws are consistent with the State's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Australia); ¶ 110.79 Amend laws and regulations, including the law on telecommunications and the interministerial prakas on publication controls of website and social media processing via the Internet, that effectively limit freedom of expression, and end all forms of interference in and surveillance of media channels and online speech (Finland); ¶ 110.82 Bring the Criminal Code into line with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by repealing or amending articles on insulting the king, defamation, insults, incitement, unlawful coercion of judicial authorities and the discrediting of judicial decisions (Germany); ¶ 110.84 Repeal the provisions of the Criminal Code that can be used to restrict freedom of expression, assembly and association, and decriminalize offences such as defamation (Iceland); ¶ 110.92 Reform the Criminal Code to ensure that freedom of expression, assembly and association are guaranteed, in addition to the protection of human rights defenders, and ensure the latter can go about their work without fear of intimidation (Spain); ¶ 110.94 Revise recent enactments and revisions of legislation that violate the rights to freedom of expression and association, including the vague and broad grounds for preventing publication on the Internet in the proclamation on publication controls of websites and social media (Sweden); ¶ 110.96 Amend the law on telecommunications, and adopt the law on access to information in line with international standards of the right to the freedom of expression and the right to privacy (Switzerland); ¶ 110.97 Reverse the forced closure of media outlets, repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that criminalize defamation and restrict freedom of expression and assembly, and remove, without conditions, the ban on the 118 former members of the Cambodia National Rescue Party from engaging in political activities (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); and ¶ 110.100 Consider repealing legislation that permits the dissolution of political parties and a ban on political leaders without due process (Brazil).

<sup>8</sup> UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cambodia*, (5 April 2019), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/41/17. ¶ 110.30.

<sup>9</sup> THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA arts. 35, 37, 38, 41, and 42 (Cambodia). Available at: [http://cambodia.ohchr.org/~cambodiaohchr/sites/default/files/Constitution\\_ENG.pdf](http://cambodia.ohchr.org/~cambodiaohchr/sites/default/files/Constitution_ENG.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> For example: "The right to strike and to non-violent demonstration shall be implemented in the framework of a law." (Art. 37); "The regime of the media shall be determined by law." (Art. 41); "Khmer Citizens shall have the right to establish associations and political parties. These rights shall be determined by law." (Art. 42).

<sup>11</sup> THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA art. 41 (Cambodia). Available at: [http://cambodia.ohchr.org/~cambodiaohchr/sites/default/files/Constitution\\_ENG.pdf](http://cambodia.ohchr.org/~cambodiaohchr/sites/default/files/Constitution_ENG.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO), *New Penal Code a Setback for Freedom of Expression Issues*, Dec. 9, 2010, [www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=233](http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=233) (last visited July 11, 2018).

<sup>13</sup> Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO), *ANNEX II: New Penal Code Provisions which May be Used to Limit Expressive Freedoms*, Dec. 9, 2010, <http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/press/files/LICADHO-FoE+2010PenalCode.pdf> (last visited July 11, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CRIMINAL LAW art. 495 (Cambodia). Available at:

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[https://www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/khm/criminal\\_code\\_of\\_the\\_kingdom\\_of\\_cambodia\\_html/Cambodia\\_Criminal-Code-of-the-Kingdom-of-Cambodia-30-Nov-2009-Eng.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/khm/criminal_code_of_the_kingdom_of_cambodia_html/Cambodia_Criminal-Code-of-the-Kingdom-of-Cambodia-30-Nov-2009-Eng.pdf).

<sup>15</sup>GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CRIMINAL LAW art. 502 (Cambodia).

Available at:

[https://www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/khm/criminal\\_code\\_of\\_the\\_kingdom\\_of\\_cambodia\\_html/Cambodia\\_Criminal-Code-of-the-Kingdom-of-Cambodia-30-Nov-2009-Eng.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/khm/criminal_code_of_the_kingdom_of_cambodia_html/Cambodia_Criminal-Code-of-the-Kingdom-of-Cambodia-30-Nov-2009-Eng.pdf).

<sup>16</sup>GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CRIMINAL LAW art. 523 (Cambodia).

Available at:

[https://www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/khm/criminal\\_code\\_of\\_the\\_kingdom\\_of\\_cambodia\\_html/Cambodia\\_Criminal-Code-of-the-Kingdom-of-Cambodia-30-Nov-2009-Eng.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/khm/criminal_code_of_the_kingdom_of_cambodia_html/Cambodia_Criminal-Code-of-the-Kingdom-of-Cambodia-30-Nov-2009-Eng.pdf).

<sup>17</sup>LAW ON THE PRESS art. 13 (Cambodia).

<sup>18</sup>Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights, *The Dangers of Dissent: Attacks on Human Rights Defenders*, (Phnom Penh: LICADHO, July 2017), 12. Also available online at [https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports/files/2232017\\_HRD\\_ENG\[finalWeb\].pdf](https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports/files/2232017_HRD_ENG[finalWeb].pdf).

<sup>19</sup>LAW ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS art. 80 (Cambodia).

<sup>20</sup>Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights, *The Dangers of Dissent: Attacks on Human Rights Defenders*, (Phnom Penh: LICADHO, July 2017), 6. Also available online at [https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports/files/2232017\\_HRD\\_ENG\[finalWeb\].pdf](https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports/files/2232017_HRD_ENG[finalWeb].pdf).

<sup>21</sup>Human Rights Watch, *Cambodia: Reject Draft Amendments to the Constitution and Criminal Code*, Feb. 21, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/21/cambodia-reject-draft-amendments-constitution-and-criminal-code> (last visited July 11, 2018).

<sup>22</sup>Human Rights Watch, *Cambodia: Reject Draft Amendments to the Constitution and Criminal Code*, Feb. 21, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/21/cambodia-reject-draft-amendments-constitution-and-criminal-code> (last visited July 11, 2018).

<sup>23</sup>Human Rights Watch, *Cambodia: Reject Draft Amendments to the Constitution and Criminal Code*, Feb. 21, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/21/cambodia-reject-draft-amendments-constitution-and-criminal-code> (last visited July 11, 2018).

<sup>24</sup>Human Rights Watch, *Cambodia: Reject Draft Amendments to the Constitution and Criminal Code*, Feb. 21, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/21/cambodia-reject-draft-amendments-constitution-and-criminal-code> (last visited July 10, 2018).

<sup>25</sup>Prak Chan Thul, Cambodia adopts China style internet gateway amid opposition crackdown, Reuters, Feb. 17, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cambodia-internet-idUSKBN2AH1CZ>.

<sup>26</sup>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Cambodia, *State of Press Freedom in Cambodia*, (Cambodia: OHCHR Cambodia, 2022), ¶ 35, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/press-freedom-cambodia-en.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup>Fiona Kelliher, Leaked Law Proposal would give Cambodia expanded powers to censor critics, Rest of World, Mar. 10, 2023, <https://restofworld.org/2023/cybersecurity-law-draft-cambodia-elections/>.

<sup>28</sup><https://www.brookings.edu/articles/covid-19-comes-to-cambodia/#:~:text=Authorities%20in%20Cambodia%20have%20tried,group%20intentionally%20spreading%20the%20virus.>

<sup>29</sup>[https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports/files/238Analysis\\_COVID-19\\_Law\\_20220929\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports/files/238Analysis_COVID-19_Law_20220929_ENG.pdf).

<sup>30</sup>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Cambodia, *State of Press Freedom in Cambodia*, (Cambodia: OHCHR Cambodia, 2022), ¶ 43, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/press-freedom-cambodia-en.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup>LAW ON ASSOCIATIONS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS art. 24 (Cambodia). Available at: [http://cambodia.ohchr.org/~cambodiaohchr/sites/default/files/Unofficial\\_Translation\\_of\\_5th\\_LANGO\\_ENG.pdf](http://cambodia.ohchr.org/~cambodiaohchr/sites/default/files/Unofficial_Translation_of_5th_LANGO_ENG.pdf).

<sup>32</sup>Janelle Retka, *Two Years on, NGO Law Remains 'Ambiguous,'* Cambodia Daily, July 13, 2017, <https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/two-years-on-ngo-law-remains-ambiguous-132456/>.

<sup>33</sup>LAW ON ASSOCIATIONS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS art. 25 (Cambodia). Available at: [http://cambodia.ohchr.org/~cambodiaohchr/sites/default/files/Unofficial\\_Translation\\_of\\_5th\\_LANGO\\_ENG.pdf](http://cambodia.ohchr.org/~cambodiaohchr/sites/default/files/Unofficial_Translation_of_5th_LANGO_ENG.pdf)

Note that a separate Notice No. 175 on associations was repealed in 2018.

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<sup>34</sup> UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cambodia*, (5 April 2019), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/41/17. ¶110.24 Take the necessary measures to re-establish an environment respectful of the rights of the civil society, in particular by revising the law on associations and non-governmental organizations (France); ¶110.89 Release immediately from custody any individual detained for their peaceful exercise of freedom of expression and assembly, and drop all criminal charges against these individuals (Norway); ¶110.93 Protect the rights of human rights defenders, and bring laws, regulations and policies on freedom of expression, association and assembly into accordance with the State's international obligations (Italy); ¶110.107 Take the measures necessary to ensure that the right to freedom of assembly and association is not hindered by arbitrary restrictions and/or excessive use of force (Lithuania); ¶110.110 Ensure a free civic space, allowing human rights defenders and journalists to freely express themselves both offline and online, without fear of harassment or reprisal, and refrain from prosecuting persons for exercising their fundamental rights under the Criminal Code and the law on telecommunications (Netherlands); ¶110.113 Protect journalists, human rights defenders, members of the political opposition and trade union workers from harassment, arbitrary arrest and physical attacks, and investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of such attacks (Slovenia); ¶110.115 Adopt the measures necessary to guarantee the rights of those who work to protect and promote human rights, in particular human rights defenders, and investigate and punish those responsible for threats and violence against them and their families (Argentina); ¶110.116 Adopt the measures necessary to protect the rights of human rights defenders, trade unionists and journalists (Chile); ¶110.126 Take all necessary steps towards a substantive reduction in the time spent by persons in pretrial detention (Austria).

<sup>35</sup> UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, *Cambodia: UN experts alarmed by civil society crackdown, attacks on human rights defenders*, November 16, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26505&LangID=E> (last visited January 29, 2022).

<sup>36</sup> UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, *Cambodia: UN experts alarmed by civil society crackdown, attacks on human rights defenders*, November 15, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26505&LangID=E> (last visited January 29, 2022).

<sup>37</sup> Interviews conducted by The Advocates (2017–2018).

<sup>38</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, (27 Aug. 2019), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/42/60, ¶56.

<sup>39</sup> *Cambodia: Repeal of Abusive Associations Rule*, Human Rights Watch, Dec. 7 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/12/07/cambodia-repeal-abusive-associations-rule>.

<sup>40</sup> The Fundamental Freedoms Monitoring Project, *Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitor: Fourth Annual Report*, (International Center For Not-for-Profit Law, 2020), 6. Available at: <https://www.icnl.org/wp-content/uploads/FFMP-Year-4-Annual-Report.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> The Fundamental Freedoms Monitoring Project, *Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitor: Third Annual Report*, (International Center For Not-for-Profit Law, 2019), 32. Available at: [https://www.icnl.org/wp-content/uploads/FFMP-Year-3-Annual-Report-2018-2019\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.icnl.org/wp-content/uploads/FFMP-Year-3-Annual-Report-2018-2019_ENG.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* at 18.

<sup>43</sup> Cambodian Center for Human Rights, ADHOC, Solidary Center, *Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitor: Sixth Annual Report*, (Washington, D.C.: International Center for Not-For-Profit Law, 2021), 20. Available at: <https://cchrcambodia.org/admin/media/report/report/english/CCHR%20FFMP%20Report%20Year%206-Jan-Dec-2021-ENG.pdf>.

<sup>44</sup> Khy Sovuthy, *Two jailed activists reportedly beaten in prison, official denies charge*, Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association, Dec. 18, 2020, <https://cambojanews.com/two-jailed-activists-reportedly-beaten-in-prison-official-denies-charge/>.

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/organization/khmer-thavrak>.

<sup>46</sup> Joint communication from Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia; Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; Special Rapporteur on the situation of humanrights defenders; and Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, U.N. Doc AL KHM 8/20, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25670>.

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<sup>47</sup> Gerald Flynn and Phoung Vantha, *Protesters Beaten Ahead of Paris Peace Agreements 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*, Cambodianess, Oct. 22, 2021, <https://cambodianess.com/article/protesters-beaten-ahead-of-paris-peace-agreements-30th-anniversary>.

<sup>48</sup> Press Release, Special Procedures, Cambodia: UN experts deeply disturbed by detention of boy with autism for on-line criticism, (Sept. 2, 2021), also available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/09/cambodia-un-experts-deeply-disturbed-detention-boy-autism-line-criticism?LangID=E&NewsID=27423>.

<sup>49</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Cambodia, *State of Press Freedom in Cambodia*, (Cambodia: OHCHR Cambodia, 2022), ¶ 43, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/press-freedom-cambodia-en.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup> Cambodian Center for Human Rights, ADHOC, Solidary Center, *Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitor: Sixth Annual Report*, (Washington, D.C.: International Center for Not-For-Profit Law, 2021), 12. Available at: <https://cchrcambodia.org/admin/media/report/report/english/CCHR%20FFMP%20Report%20Year%206-Jan-Dec-2021-ENG.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cambodia*, (5 April 2019), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/41/17. ¶110.81 Guarantee freedom of expression for all citizens and journalists, including on the Internet, by revising the latest constitutional amendment and the interministerial instruction of May 2018 allowing surveillance of Internet contents (France); ¶110.83 Ensure freedom of expression on the Internet by revoking interministerial decree No. 170 on “publication controls of websites and social media processing via the Internet” (Germany); ¶110.85 Take all measures to protect and support journalists, human rights defenders, trade union workers, land and environmental activists and other civil society actors, and members of the political opposition (Iceland); ¶ 110.86 Adopt measures aimed at ensuring freedom of expression and the enjoyment of civil and political rights by the population (Colombia); ¶ 110.87 Create the conditions necessary to allow all individuals to enjoy their fundamental rights, particularly freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly (Costa Rica); ¶110.89 Release immediately from custody any individual detained for their peaceful exercise of freedom of expression and assembly, and drop all criminal charges against these individuals (Norway); ¶110.93 Protect the rights of human rights defenders, and bring laws, regulations and policies on freedom of expression, association and assembly into accordance with the State’s international obligations (Italy); ¶110.94 Revise recent enactments and revisions of legislation that violate the rights to freedom of expression and association, including the vague and broad grounds for preventing publication on the Internet in the proclamation on publication controls of websites and social media (Sweden); ¶110.95 Ensure that all citizens may fully enjoy their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and association (Switzerland); ¶110.96 Amend the law on telecommunications, and adopt the law on access to information in line with international standards of the right to the freedom of expression and the right to privacy (Switzerland); ¶110.98 Immediately remove all undue restrictions on civil society and independent media, including by withdrawing the interministerial decision known as prakas No. 170 on digital expression (United States of America); ¶110.99 Take all measures necessary to ensure a safe environment to guarantee the full enjoyment of freedom of expression of journalists and of the general population, and investigate and sanction all forms of violence against them (Argentina); ¶110.101 Take measures to protect the freedom of expression online and offline, as well as freedom of association and assembly (Brazil); ¶110.106 Redouble efforts to protect freedom of opinion and expression, both online and offline, to ensure and promote a safe environment for journalists, human rights defenders and the political opposition, and effectively and thoroughly investigate all attacks against them (Lithuania); ¶110.108 Revoke trade union registration and reporting requirements that result in the restriction of freedom of association, assembly and expression (Greece); ¶110.110 Ensure a free civic space, allowing human rights defenders and journalists to freely express themselves both offline and online, without fear of harassment or reprisal, and refrain from prosecuting persons for exercising their fundamental rights under the Criminal Code and the law on telecommunications (Netherlands); ¶110.111 Release immediately and unconditionally all remaining political prisoners and opponents, and drop all charges against them, including the full release of opposition leader Kem Sokha (New Zealand); ¶110.112 End harassment and arbitrary arrests of human rights defenders, members of the political opposition, activists and journalists (Croatia); ¶110.114 Step up efforts to prevent the harassment of human rights defenders, journalists, trade union workers, protesters, land and other civil society actors, and protect their rights (Czechia); ¶110.117 Create an enabling environment for free and pluralistic media, including by ceasing judicial harassment against journalists and abuse of tax regulations to harass media outlets and associations (Greece); ¶110.118 Continue to implement measures to strengthen the independence of both the judiciary and the media (Italy); ¶110.152 As previously committed to by the Government following the State’s second review,

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simplify and reform registration procedures for unions and other civil society organizations (United States of America).

<sup>52</sup> Information from The Committee for Paris Peace Accords on Cambodia, Minnesota. Email communication September 10, 2023 (on file with authors).

<sup>53</sup> *Cambodia: Access to Independent Media Blocked*, Human Rights Watch. Aug. 2, 2023,

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/08/02/cambodia-access-independent-media-blocked>.

<sup>54</sup> Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2022: Cambodia," accessed Jan. 27, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/cambodia#>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> *Cambodia expands monitoring of 'fake news,'* Union of Catholic Asian News, Jan. 28, 2021,

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/cambodia-expands-monitoring-of-fake-news/91186>.

<sup>58</sup> Cambodian Center for Human Rights, ADHOC, Solidary Center, *Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitor: Sixth Annual Report*, (Washington, D.C.: International Center for Not-For-Profit Law, 2021), 21. Available at: <https://cchrcambodia.org/admin/media/report/report/english/CCHR%20FFMP%20Report%20Year%206-Jan-Dec-2021-ENG.pdf>.

<sup>59</sup> [https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/2020\\_CCHR\\_Factsheet\\_SLAPP\\_ENG.pdf](https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/2020_CCHR_Factsheet_SLAPP_ENG.pdf).

<sup>60</sup> *Cambodia sentences journalist Youn Chhiv to 1 year in prison*, Committee to Protect Journalists, Oct. 1, 2021,

<https://cpj.org/2021/10/cambodia-sentences-journalist-youn-chhiv-to-1-year-in-prison/>.

<sup>61</sup> *Cambodian court condemned for jailing journalist*, VOA News, <https://www.voanews.com/a/cambodian-court-condemned-for-jailing-journalist/6261112.html>.

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=292>.

<sup>63</sup> *Cambodian reporter facing five years in prison for comment about vaccines*, Reporters Without Borders, Jul. 21, 2021, <https://rsf.org/en/cambodian-reporter-facing-five-years-prison-comment-about-vaccines>.

<sup>64</sup> *Cambodia: Appeal court confirms jail sentence for journalist*, International Federation of Journalists, Jul. 13, 2022, <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/cambodia-appeal-court-confirms-jail-sentence-for-journalist>.

<sup>65</sup> *Cambodian journalist jailed for two Facebook posts critical of Hun Sen*, Reporters Without Borders, Jun. 30, 2020, <https://rsf.org/en/cambodian-journalist-jailed-two-facebook-posts-critical-hun-sen>.

<sup>66</sup> *Cambodian reporter facing five years in prison for comment about vaccines*, Reporters Without Borders, Jul. 21, 2021, <https://rsf.org/en/cambodian-reporter-facing-five-years-prison-comment-about-vaccines>.

<sup>67</sup> Information from Cambodians in diaspora. Email communication January 2023 (on file with authors).

<sup>68</sup> UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cambodia*, (5 April 2019), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/41/17. ¶110.80 Take the necessary measures to allow members of the opposition to participate in Cambodian political life (France); ¶110.88 Restore democratic and political space, ensuring participation for political parties, civil society and independent media (Norway); ¶110.90 Continue efforts to make democratic space more inclusive (Republic of Korea); ¶110.91 Create conditions conducive to free political debate and competition with a view to rebuilding a democracy in which the media and civil society, including human rights defenders, can freely carry out their work without interference or hindrance, as recommended by Ireland during the previous cycle, and in particular to ensure that their work is not hindered by restrictions on freedom of assembly and expression, either online or offline (Ireland); ¶110.103 Promote dialogue among political actors, freedom and the rights of the people and the democratic process, in order to unite the people towards development; in this process, ensure an environment in which the rights of all political actors, civil society, the media and others are respected and their activities are not constrained (Japan); ¶110.138 Continue its efforts in the area of electoral reform (Bhutan); ¶110.139 Continue to work to hold pluralistic electoral processes (Chile); ¶110.104 Re-establish the opposition party, namely the Cambodian National Rescue Party, and reinstate its members (Canada); ¶110.111 Release immediately and unconditionally all remaining political prisoners and opponents, and drop all charges against them, including the full release of opposition leader Kem Sokha (New Zealand); ¶110.112 End harassment and arbitrary arrests of human rights defenders, members of the political opposition, activists and journalists (Croatia); ¶110.137 Create the conditions for genuine, multiparty democracy in the country and for free and fair elections to be held (Greece); ¶110.31 Revise or repeal recent legal acts potentially subject to restrictive or arbitrary interpretation, including the law on political parties and the election laws, the law on associations and non-governmental

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organizations and the interministerial proclamation of May 2018 on social media, in order to bring them into conformity with international human rights law and standards (Austria); ¶110.78 Immediately and unconditionally reinstate the rights of members of the political opposition and release all persons who have been arbitrarily detained, including Kem Sokha (United States of America).

<sup>69</sup>Human Rights Watch, *Cambodia: Supreme Court Dissolves Democracy*, Nov. 17, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/17/cambodia-supreme-court-dissolves-democracy> (last visited July 11, 2018).

<sup>70</sup>Sopheng Cheang, *Cambodia's top opposition party barred from July elections, leaving Hun Sen's party unchallenged*, AP News, May 25, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/cambodia-opposition-party-election-hun-sen-63659ff8f2de992d84d2be748afbab8b>; Cambodia's ruling party says it won a landslide victory in elections, Jul. 24, 2023, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-pauses-some-aid-imposes-visa-bans-after-neither-free-nor-fair-cambodia-2023-07-24/>.

<sup>71</sup>Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, (27 Aug. 2019), U.N. DOC. A/HRC/42/60, ¶71.

<sup>72</sup>Prak Chan Thul, *Cambodia resumes treason trial of opposition leader Kem Sokha*, Reuters, January 18, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/cambodia-resume-treason-trial-opposition-leader-2022-01-18/> (last visited January 29, 2022); Seth Mydans, *Cambodian Opposition Leader Is Found Guilty of Treason Before Election*, The New York Times, Mar. 3, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/03/world/asia/cambodia-kem-sokha-guilty.html>.

<sup>73</sup>Human Rights Watch, *Cambodia: Drop Case Against Opposition Leader*, Sept. 7, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/06/cambodia-drop-case-against-opposition-leader> (last visited July 11, 2018).

<sup>74</sup>Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, (27 Aug. 2019), U.N. DOC. A/HRC/42/60, ¶9.

<sup>75</sup>Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights, *The Dangers of Dissent: Attacks on Human Rights Defenders*, (Phnom Penh: LICADHO, July 2017), 13. Also available online at [https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports/files/2232017\\_HRD\\_ENG\[finalWeb\].pdf](https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports/files/2232017_HRD_ENG[finalWeb].pdf).

<sup>76</sup>Interviews conducted by The Advocates (2017–2018).

<sup>77</sup>Human Rights Watch, *Cambodia: Hun Sen Threatens Families of Activists, October 28, 2020*, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/28/cambodia-hun-sen-threatens-families-activists> (last visited January 29, 2022).