



**មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលសិទ្ធិមនុស្សកម្ពុជា**  
**Cambodian Center for Human Rights**



**CCHR and CIVICUS Joint PRESS RELEASE – Phnom Penh, 26 June 2014**

**CCHR and CIVICUS condemn the Cambodian government’s rejection of key recommendations during its 2<sup>nd</sup> Universal Periodic Review**

Today, 26 June 2014, [the Cambodian Center for Human Rights](#) (“CCHR”) and CIVICUS, the global civil society alliance, condemn the Royal Government of Cambodia’s (the “RGC”) decision to reject key recommendations on the human rights situation in the Kingdom of Cambodia put forward by United Nations member States during Cambodia’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Universal Periodic Review (the “UPR”).

While CCHR and CIVICUS commend the RGC for its acceptance of the majority of the recommendations, they are seriously disappointed by its refusal to accept recommendations mainly relating to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, which are fundamental in improving the current human rights situation.

The UPR is a process by which all UN member States undergo a review of their human rights record. The UPR occurs every four years, and Cambodia completed its second review at the beginning of this year. A total of 206 recommendations were made to the Cambodian delegation. 164 enjoy the support of the RGC. However, the RGC today chose to take note of 38 recommendations, meaning it has not committed to implementing them, and to reject four.

Among the recommendations “noted” and “rejected” are those relating to amending articles of the Press Law and the Criminal Code of the Kingdom of Cambodia on defamation; ensuring the independence of the media; and that Internet laws comply with international human rights standards. In addition, recommendations relating to respecting freedom of assembly and investigating the excessive use of violence against protesters were also not taken on board by the RGC. One recommendation to ensure a “favorable climate for activities of human rights defenders, journalists and other civil society actors” was also not accepted. This further demonstrates that the RGC has no intention to respect Cambodians’ fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly and association.

Other recommendations that were not accepted relate to the use of pre-trial detention which CCHR has highlighted as excessive, establishing a national preventive mechanism against torture, the ratification of the optional protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and maintaining the moratorium on Economic Land Concessions (“ELCs”) and reviewing them.

The accepted recommendations cover issues including: increased cooperation with the OHCHR; eradicating discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, and nationality; improving detention conditions; eliminating child labor; strengthening the independence of the judiciary and the media; combating human trafficking; and creating a national human rights institute. CCHR and CIVICUS welcome the public commitment to tackling these issues. However, we urge the RGC to effectively implement these recommendations. During its first UPR, the RGC accepted all recommendations but implemented none, demonstrating the little consideration given to the UPR process by the Cambodian government. CCHR and CIVICUS therefore strongly encourage the RGC to work with international organizations and civil society in order to fully realize the recent recommendations.

**Ms. Ramana Sorn, CCHR Freedom of Expression Project Coordinator comments:**

*“It appears that the RGC has taken a more realistic approach to their second UPR, because at the last review, they simply accepted all recommendations but made little effort to actually implement them. That being said, it is within the power of the Cambodian government to put into effect all of these recommendations; the RGC just needs the political will to do so, and the rejection of several important and necessary recommendations on freedom of expression and assembly demonstrates that the will is not there.”*

**CIVICUS Head of Policy and Research, Mandeep Tiwana, comments:**

*“We remain concerned about the silencing of critical civil society voices in Cambodia through a combination of legal and extra legal measures. We urge RGC to take concrete steps to stop intimidation and harassment of critical civil society voices, particularly those of environmental and land rights activists.”*

ENDS

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Notes to Editor:

CCHR, founded in November 2002, is a non-aligned, independent, non-governmental organization that works to promote and protect democracy and respect for human throughout Cambodia.

CCHR is a member of International Freedom of Expression Exchanges (IFEX), the global network for freedom of expression. CCHR is also a member of the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) SOS-Torture Network.

The Cambodian Human Rights Portal [www.sithi.org](http://www.sithi.org) is the 2011 winner of the Information Society Innovation Fund Award in the category of Rights and Freedoms and the 2013 winner of the Communication for Social Change Award, awarded by the Centre of Communication and Social Change at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia.

[CIVICUS](#) is a global network of civil society organisations and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society around the world. Founded in 1993, CIVICUS proudly promotes voices from the global South and has members in more than 130 countries throughout the world.