



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Press Statement

**"Crime is a crime, and it cannot be justified for other aspirations",
States the Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson**

Phnom Penh, 03 March 2023 – The Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation noted with grave concern some Western foreign diplomats' arbitrary extension of their regular diplomatic role to an extraterritorial invigilator of a judicial system of the host country, which runs counter to the universally accepted principles governing relations between sovereign states, namely Article 2 (7) of the UN Charter and the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR).

1. To state that the trial against Mr. Kem Sokha built on a "fabricated conspiracy" is prejudiced and hypocritical. The fact is that the charge solely derives from constitutional and criminal breach, not a political motive. The foreign conspiracy is explicitly stipulated in Article 439 and 443 of Cambodia's penal code. Western countries also take foreign interference seriously with abundant instances of politicians being indicated for such a heinous crime. Among them is the case of Mr. Paul Manafort. An attack on judiciary of other countries, including the International Criminal Court, by certain Western governments is not unprecedented.
2. To claim that the conviction against the law-breaking politician is a "miscarriage of justice" is unfounded and biased. The 66 rounds of hearings have been smooth, transparent, public and legal with close observance of representatives of journalists, civil society organizations and foreign embassies. As entitled by law, the defendant has enjoyed full opportunities for legal defense with support of four attorneys.
3. All evidences had been presented, debated and verified in a transparent, thorough and just manner with a view to uncovering the truth. One of them - aired on "CBN" in 2013 - whose authenticity was later confirmed by the convict, demonstrates his receipt of foreign instruction and support to carry out step-by-step plots with a view to toppling a legitimate government. Crime is a crime, and it cannot be justified for other aspirations.



4. When it comes to the norms of international relations, the said foreign envoys' political narrative, whether it derives from delusion or arrogance, constituted a violation of article 41 (1) of the 1961 VCDR, underlining that diplomats "have a duty not to interfere in the internal affairs of the [receiving] State", to which representatives from a civilized country, whether big or small, shall fully adhere.
 5. Despite the absence of a few politicians, who are either in conflict with the law or banned from politics due to their infringement of the law, Cambodia remains steadfast in holding the coming July's general elections in a free, fair, just and transparent manner, the one that will be fully reflective of the people's will.
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