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# Cambodia's shrinking democratic space affected credibility of national elections: UN experts

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GENEVA (2 August 2023) – A range of serious human rights violation and severe restrictions on civic and political space affected the credib.

of Cambodia's national elections on 23 July, UN experts said today.

"The lead up to recent national elections in Cambodia and its results are extremely disconcerting," the experts said. "It has affected the credibility of the entire electoral process."

The UN experts said the shrinking civic and political space, including a ban on the main opposition party, media restrictions and blockages and the harassment of perceived opponents of the ruling elite had distorted the electoral architecture and process.

"As a result, the national elections were very unbalanced and raised major concerns for the international community," they said.

The shrinking democratic space and repressive practices linked to Cambodia's political leadership seriously undermined a range of human rights and the promise of a liberal democracy under the country's international obligations and the Paris Peace Agreements, the experts warned.

"Cambodia's new government must abide by its international human rights obligations and the Paris Peace Agreements and address an array of serious human rights violations – old and new – which impede sustainable and inclusive development in the country," the UN experts said.

The experts said Cambodia's human rights record will be considered by the UN Human Rights Council later this year, bringing the country's 2022 commune elections and 2023 national elections into international focus.

"Thirty years since peace was assured by the Paris Peace Agreements, a major obstacle remains the failure to ensure and protect human rights and the systemic undermining of democratic principles," they said.

With the Prime Minister of Cambodia expected to transfer power to his eldest son in the near future, the international community must remain vigilant and prepare a cohesive international response to the country's democratic crisis, the experts said.

ENDS

*\*The experts: Mr. Vitit Muntarbhorn, **Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia**; Mr. Fabian Salvioli, the **Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation & guarantees of non-recurrence**; Mr. Nyaletsossi Clément Voule, **Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association**; Mr. Tomoya Obokata, **Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences**; Ms. Paula Gaviria, **Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons**, Ms. Margaret Satterthwaite, **Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers**; **Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances**; Mr. Gerard Quinn, **Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities***

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*UN human rights country page: **Cambodia***

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