



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING

ROYAL EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA
JAPAN

AMBASSADOR

Tokyo, 28 April 2025

H.E. Mr. SAKAGUCHI Naoto

Member of the House of Representatives, Japan

Tokyo

Excellency,

I would like to address your recent remarks concerning human rights issues in Cambodia, as raised during the recent Foreign Affairs Committee Meeting on April 16, 2025, at the House of Representatives. While we appreciate views on this important matter, it is essential that it accurately reflects Cambodia's realities and ongoing efforts in advancing democratic governance and human rights protections.

It has come to my attention that your insights may have been primarily shaped by engagement with a number of Cambodian individuals residing in Japan, including some who have actively participated in demonstrations against the Royal Government of Cambodia. In light of this, and in the spirit of constructive dialogue and mutual understanding between our two countries, I would like to provide factual clarifications on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia to address certain issues that we believe to be misleading, lacking sufficient evidence, and politically motivated.

1. The dissolution of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP):

The dissolution of CNRP is a long-standing issue with deep roots. The Supreme Court dissolved the CNRP on November 16, 2017, in accordance with Articles 6, 7, and 44 of the Law on Political Parties. This decision does not equate to the government attempting to restrict the political system of a pluralistic liberal

democracy. *For more details, please refer the attached document, version 2 of "To Tell the Truth: Cambodia, Stability and Development First"*

2. The 2018 General election:

Cambodia adheres to a multi-party democratic system as clearly demonstrated by the sheer number of political parties involved over the last five general elections: 4 in 1993; 7 in 1998; 7 in 2003; 11 in 2008; 8 in 2013; 20 in 2018; and 18 in 2023. For the 2018 election, 20 political parties were officially registered. In the run-up to the communal and parliamentary elections in 2023 and 2024, the civil political space has been broadened. The 2023 general elections recorded a voter turnout of 84.59% to choose one of the 18 contesting political parties and their future leaders. The election has been widely assessed as free and fair, credible, and just by thousands of observers, including 333 international representatives from 65 countries. In addition, the Senate election was also held in a free, fair, and peaceful manner, culminating in the unanimous election of Samdech Techo HUN SEN as the President of the Senate by all 62 senators present at the inaugural session.

3. The grievance regarding the "family-based power shift":

It disregards the fact that political power in Cambodia is constitutionally and democratically vested in the people. The transfers of power strictly adhere to a democratic process at the party, electoral, and parliamentary levels, as safeguarded by the Constitution.

4. Cambodia's Development and Peace:

Cambodia's experience stands as a powerful testament that conflict can be resolved, transitional justice can be achieved, and former war zones can be transformed into areas of peace, cooperation, and development. This transformation did not happen by chance; it was the result of the visionary leadership of Samdech Techo HUN Sen, former Prime Minister of Cambodia. His "win-win" policy not only brought an end to decades of internal conflict but also laid the foundation for national reconciliation, long-term stability, and sustained socio-economic development continues to this day.

Cambodia's impressive socio-economic development progress speaks for itself. Life expectancy rose from 59 years in 2000 to 76 years in 2021. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cambodia's economy experienced consistent annual growth of over 7% for more than two decades, with a growth rate of 6% recorded in 2024. Notably, Cambodia, along with Senegal, has been approved for graduation from the Least Developed Countries category in 2029.

5. Sun Chanthy's case:

In December last year, the Phnom Penh Municipal Court sentenced Sun Chanthy, former President of the opposition National Power Party (PPP), to two years in prison and fined him four million Riels (about \$1000) for incitement causing serious social unrest by spreading false information on social media with the intention of misleading the public. The court also bans the accused Sun Chanthy from voting or standing in elections for life.

6. Freedom of press and expression:

The Cambodian government has made significant progress and achieved notable milestones in advancing the enjoyment of human rights for its people. Freedom of the press and freedom of expression are fundamental pillars of democracy. The country maintains an open stance on these freedoms, which are safeguarded by both Cambodian legislation and international agreements to which Cambodia is a signatory. This reflects the Kingdom's commitment to upholding human rights and the rule of law, as articulated in Article 41 of its Constitution.

The Cambodian government supports freedom of expression. However, it must enforce the law against individuals who distort facts, make false accusations, and create social unrest with the intent to mislead the public. Such actions pose a significant threat to the country's peace, stability, and economic well-being and are not protected under the principle of freedom of expression. The Cambodian authorities have only taken an action against those who violate the country's laws and regulations.

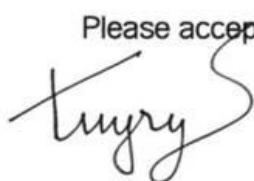
According to the Cambodian Ministry of Information, approximately 10,000 journalists and over 2,000 media outlets operate within the country. A recent report,

"The State of Press Freedom in Cambodia", published in April 2024, accurately reflects the situation as perceived by all professional journalists. The survey indicated that 79.8% of the 341 respondents rated press freedom in Cambodia as "Good," with 71% assessing it as "Good" and 8.8% rating it as "Very Good." The study also found that 95% of respondents agreed that the current diversity of media in Cambodia contributes to promoting press freedom.

7. Cambodia and Japan bilateral relation:

On bilateral relations, 2025 marks the 72nd year of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Cambodia and Japan, which have grown stronger and more dynamic over the years. In his congratulatory message to Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on October 1, 2024, **Samdech Prime Minister HUN Manet** highlighted the excellent bonds of friendship and close bilateral ties between the two nations, underpinned by frequent high-level exchanges and practical cooperation in multiple fields. Both sides reaffirmed their shared resolve to further strengthen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The Royal Government and the People of Cambodia deeply value Japan's indispensable contributions to Cambodia's peace process, rehabilitation, and ongoing support for the Kingdom's socio-economic development. Additionally, at the invitation of the Government of Japan, **Samdech Prime Minister HUN Manet** and his spouse will pay an official working visit to Japan from May 28 to 31, 2025. This visit will further advance our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, as well as deepen and expand cooperation in mutually beneficial sectors.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



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