



15 July 2023

From: Cambodian community worldwide
To: Foreign leaders

Re: Foreign governments must not recognize the results of the rigged national elections in Cambodia

Your Excellencies:

The Khmer community worldwide convened today at a hybrid forum in Long Beach, California titled “Khmer Democracy Forum: Where Do We Go From Here?”. The community members have renewed their commitment to advocacy for Cambodia with the “Khmer Community Advocacy Pledge” and issued this updated joint-letter from civil society worldwide, explaining why not recognizing the elections is the only available course of action that makes any sense.

We are providing below an update on how the elections, as the United Nations has determined, cannot be considered to be free, fair or legitimate because of Hun Sen’s widespread and thoroughgoing campaign of harsh repression, especially, taking into account the following:

1. A recent series of reports and statements by high-level agencies and officials (including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) of the United Nations, United States and European Union have found that free, fair and legitimate elections in Cambodia are impossible because of the Hun Sen government’s long-standing and thoroughgoing campaign of repression to eliminate meaningful political opposition, and to destroy the free expression of views and free choice by civil society;
2. The results of a grassroots monitoring and reporting effort by the Khmer community, demonstrating and documenting the refusal of the Hun Sen government to take any meaningful positive steps to implement the “Action Plan of Reform Measures” recommended by the United Nations in order to make the political process freer and fairer; and,
3. The sad fact that Hun Sen has “doubled down” on his highly repressive abuses designed to assure his uncontested re-election and indefinite continuance in office, including the dissolution of the CNRP in 2017, the 3 March 2023 imposition of a 27-year sentence for treason against political opposition leader Kem Sokha, the continuation of the “Mass Criminal Trials” and extrajudicial imprisonment against other political leaders, critics of the government, and independent journalists, and the recent barring of the Candlelight Party, the main opposition party and the sole credible challenger, from contesting in the upcoming election.



The Khmer community hereby:

- 1. Declares the July national elections to be invalid.**
- 2. Calls on foreign governments and the international community to not recognize of the results of the 2023 elections and deny legitimacy to any government issued from elections that are a sham and illegitimate, as the United Nations had stated.**
- 3. Calls on foreign governments and the international community to impose trade sanctions until meaningful reforms take place that make free and fair elections possible.**
- 4. Calls on the Khmer community and other human rights advocates to take the “Khmer Community’s Advocacy Pledge” to commit to use every available platform and forum at the international level to challenge Hun Sen’s campaign of human rights and rule of law abuses.**
- 5. Calls on the Khmer community, Member States and other human rights advocates to strongly condemn and hold accountable the Cambodian government for its unacceptable abuses of power starting with the scheduled April 2024 Universal Periodic Review of Cambodia that will be conducted by the UN Human Rights Council.**

We ask that the international community take the above steps to place international pressure on the Hun Sen regime until reasonable progress is made to comply with the United Nations’ recommended reform measures and a return to human rights, democracy, rule of law and the people of Cambodia get true and legitimate representation.