



KHMER DEMOCRACY FORUM

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

SATURDAY, JULY 15, 2023

HOW TO PRODUCE  
MEANINGFUL AND  
EFFECTIVE CHANGE

# **IN RECOGNITION**

**This forum brought together many diverse groups and individuals who share a common vision of freedom, democracy and human rights. The collective experiences and aspirations of all participants have served as an inspiration for making this forum possible.**

**We are on the verge of embarking on a collective journey where every individual plays a vital role in shaping our path toward a brighter future for Cambodia. This new course has been set in motion by those that have joined together in creating this forum.**

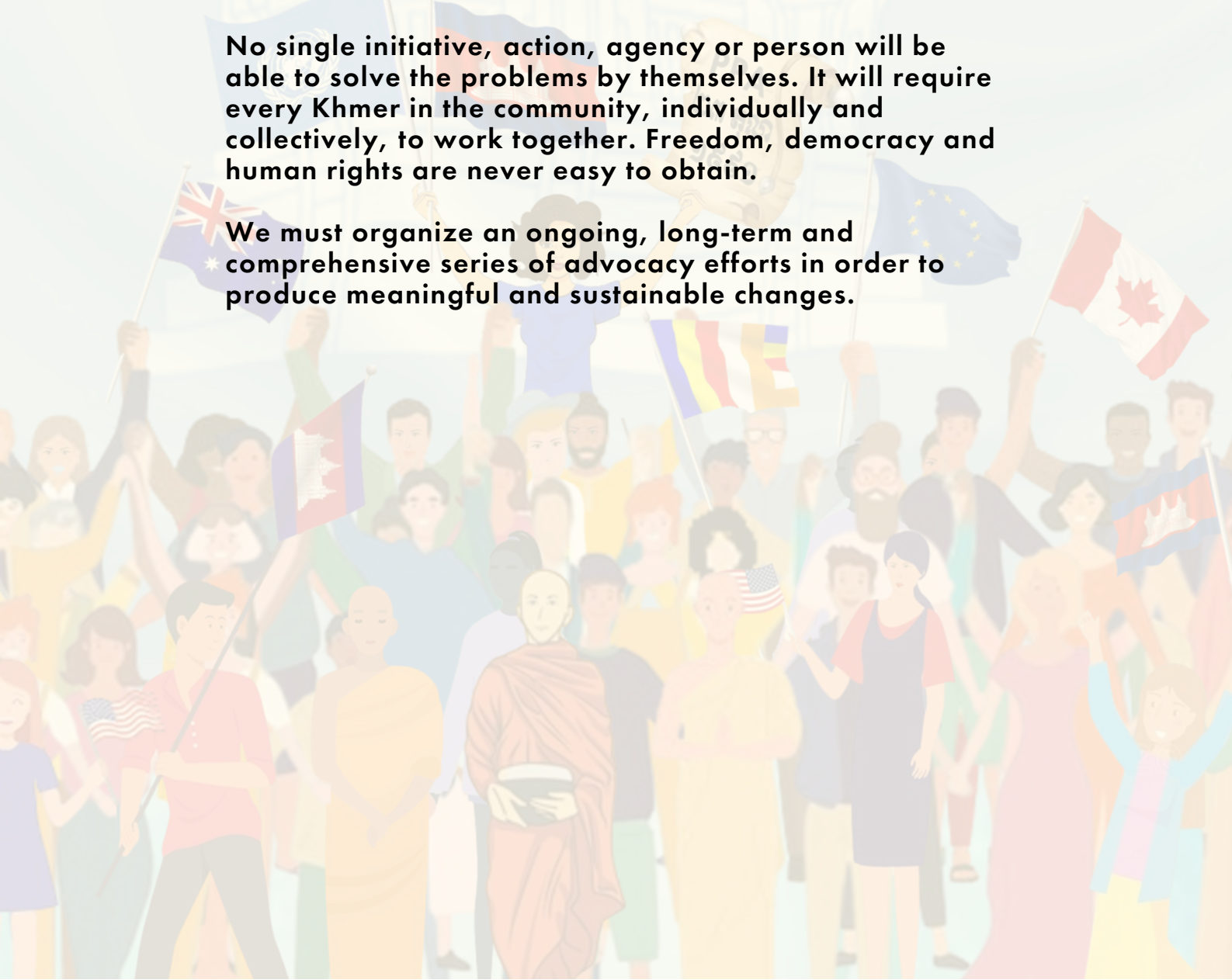
**THIS GUIDE OUTLINES THE  
NECESSARY STEPS AND ADVOCACY  
ACTIONS THAT WE, THE KHMER  
COMMUNITY, NEED TO TAKE IN  
ORDER TO CREATE THE CAMBODIA  
THAT WE ENVISION – A FREE AND  
JUST SOCIETY**

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**Speaking “truth to power,” is the first but very necessary step that we must take. We must however be mindful that the process of producing meaningful and effective change in any country, including Cambodia, is a long one.**

**No single initiative, action, agency or person will be able to solve the problems by themselves. It will require every Khmer in the community, individually and collectively, to work together. Freedom, democracy and human rights are never easy to obtain.**

**We must organize an ongoing, long-term and comprehensive series of advocacy efforts in order to produce meaningful and sustainable changes.**



# WHAT HAS HAPPENED THUS FAR

## A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE UNITED NATIONS' WORK ON CAMBODIA

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Over the last year, the United Nations has taken a leading, unusual and forceful role in condemning the abusive and autocratic actions of the Hun Sen regime.

In a series of reports and statements made at the highest level, the United Nations has made clear that Hun Sen has violated human rights, rule of law and democracy standards by carrying out abuses on a systematic basis. He has eliminated meaningful political opposition, jailed its leaders in mass criminal trials, shut down the independent media and destroyed civil society — making free, fair and legitimate elections impossible.

The United Nations has also issued an "Action Plan of Reform Measures" demanding specific reforms from the Hun Sen government that are necessary to produce free, fair and legitimate elections in Cambodia.

Among the reform demands were the following:

1. Overturning the decision declaring the main opposition political party illegal and allowing meaningful political opposition activities to take place;
2. Ending the mass criminal trials of leaders of the political opposition and other critics of the government; and
3. Allowing independent media outlets to reopen and function without interference.



# WHAT HAS HAPPENED THUS FAR

## A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE KHMER COMMUNITY'S PAST ADVOCACY WORK



\* UNITED NATIONS REPORT RELEASE

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

## UPCOMING KHMER ADVOCACY EFFORTS

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The ongoing distressing developments gave rise to a prevailing question in the minds of the Khmer people worldwide "Where do we go from here?" What advocacy steps need to be taken in the near future to deal with rigged election results and to produce a meaningful and effective change for Cambodia? Among the upcoming advocacy efforts that we are recommending as "next steps" are the following:

1. Active involvement with the United Nations Cambodia reviews (e.g., UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR)),
2. On November 1, there will be a strategic planning meeting with international experts,
3. On September 23, the United Nations will be accepting complaints on Cambodia from NGOs as part of the UPR process (See step 1),
4. Impose economic trade sanctions against Cambodia,
5. Establish a consumer boycott, and
6. Establish a tourism boycott.



# SAVE THE DATES

## THE KHMER COMMUNITY'S UPCOMING ADVOCACY EFFORTS

**JULY 15, 2023**

**KHMER DEMOCRACY FORUM:  
"WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?"  
HYBRID FORUM**

**JULY 22, 2023**

**COMMISSION OF INQUIRY FOR  
CAMBODIA'S FOURTH SESSION: THE  
NATIONAL ELECTION**

**SEPTEMBER 23, 2023**

**SUBMIT "UNIVERSAL PERIODIC  
REVIEW" REPORT TO THE UN HUMAN  
RIGHTS COUNCIL FOR APRIL 2024**

**SEPTEMBER 23, 2023**

**COMMISSION OF INQUIRY FOR  
CAMBODIA'S FIFTH SESSION:  
SPECIAL ELECTION SESSION "WHERE  
DO WE GO FROM HERE?"**

**SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023**

**54TH SESSION REVIEW OF THE UN  
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**NOVEMBER 1, 2023**

**"STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION OF  
INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS IN THE  
AFTERMATH OF CAMBODIA'S RIGGED  
NATIONAL ELECTION"**

**APRIL 2024**

**55TH SESSION OF THE UN HUMAN  
RIGHTS COUNCIL'S UNIVERSAL  
PERIODIC REVIEW SESSION ON  
CAMBODIA**

**APRIL 2024**

**EU STAKEHOLDERS, CIVIL SOCIETY,  
AND NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS  
INSTITUTIONS MEETING**

# EMBARKING ON A NEW PATH

## SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR MEANINGFUL CHANGE IN CAMBODIA

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The July 2023 national election marks a crucial moment in our pursuit of justice and democracy.

We refuse to accept the manufactured and pre-determined results. The actions of the United Nations are openly and forcefully challenging the Hun Sen regime which offers us a new course and hope for change. The United Nations has extended its support, opening doors of opportunity for us. Now, it is our responsibility to seize this moment and harness its potential for effective change.

The tightly controlled national elections in Cambodia, coupled with the systemic human rights and rule of law abuses that the Hun Sen government has created present a significant challenge to the Khmer community. But they also provide a unique opportunity to find effective ways to promote meaningful changes and to move the Khmer community and Cambodia forward on the path to human rights, the rule of law, and democracy. Let's join together to embark on this path!





# COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

## CAMBODIA FACT-FINDING HEARINGS

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### OCTOBER 23, 2021 - OPENING SESSION

The session coincided with the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Paris Peace Accords, which incorporated core democracy and human rights standards for Cambodia's government. Hun Sen, who signed the Accords, agreed to the internationally established standards. Special highlights were made on the importance of having victims' testimonies.

### MARCH 4, 2022 - SPECIAL SESSION

The second hearing coincided with the special compliance review session on Cambodia by the UN Human Rights Committee. The session emphasized the significance of coordinated efforts, collaboration among international agencies and platforms, and the launch of the Khmer Urgent Action Network to garner international attention, facilitate effective remedial action, and actively address specific cases and urgent issues.

### SEPTEMBER 10, 2022 - RULE OF LAW SESSION

The session highlighted the Hun Sen government's undermining of the rule of law and control over the judiciary to maintain uncontested power. It also emphasized why the government does not deserve international support and stressed the critical importance of holding the government accountable for its abuses.

### JULY 22, 2023 - NATIONAL ELECTION SESSION

Based on the findings of the United Nations and the Commission of Inquiry, we are confronted with the stark reality that the forthcoming elections will not be deemed free, fair, nor legitimate due to the long-standing and systematic human rights and rule of law abuses by Hun Sen.

### SEPTEMBER 23, 2023 - SPECIAL ELECTION SESSION: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

A hearing addressing the all-important question of what steps to take to deal with these farcical and illegitimate elections, as the United Nations indicated.

# THE COMMUNITY CALL TO ACTION

## KHMER COMMUNITY'S ADVOCACY PLEDGE

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The Khmer Community Advocacy Pledge is a commitment to use every available platform and forum at the international level to get Cambodia to meet the international standards of democracy, human rights and rule of law.

*"I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge to the Khmer community worldwide to take the necessary steps and advocacy actions required to create a meaningful and effective change for Cambodia that we envision – a free and just society."*

In-person participants can sign the Khmer Community Pledge at the advocacy table located in the lobby.

Zoom participants can sign your pledge at [savecambodia.org](https://savecambodia.org). You can receive your Khmer Community Pledge certificate by email, mail, or both. Residents located in Cambodia will not be able to receive their certificate by mail but can choose to receive their certificate via email, Signal, WhatsApp, or Facebook Messenger.

For more information, contact  
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