



Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item: Item 10: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia
Date: 5 October 2022
Speaker: Catherine Morris

Oral Statement to the 51st Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC) and the International Commission of Jurists, NGOs in special consultative status

Cambodia: Ensure independent courts and legal profession

Mr. President,

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada and the International Commission of Jurists appreciate the Special Rapporteur's clear benchmarks¹ for Cambodia to fulfil its international human rights obligations and the promises of the 1991 Paris Peace Accords.

It is time for Cambodia to implement the recommendations made for decades by Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies.² It is time for the government to reverse its years of power consolidation;³ ensure a free and fair election in 2023; and end Cambodia's human rights crisis by establishing independent and impartial courts and an independent legal profession.

These measures are urgently required to curb and reverse Cambodia's entrenched patterns of:

- corruption;
- creation and abuse of laws, and unfair trials to criminalize and arbitrarily detain political opponents and human rights defenders for exercising their right to freedom of association, peaceful assembly, and expression both online and offline;
- lack of access to effective remedies, resulting in impunity for serious violations, including extrajudicial killings; and
- unfair elections that, since 2018, have culminated in Cambodia's becoming a de facto one-party State.

What further measures does the Special Rapporteur suggest be undertaken by the Council, States and NGOs to encourage and assist Cambodia to implement the recommendations of Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies?

Thank you.

¹ Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Cambodia, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, A/HRC/51/66, 16 August 2022, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/51/66>; OHCHR, “UN expert proposes human rights reform agenda for Cambodia,” Press Release, 26 August 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/08/un-expert-proposes-human-rights-reform-agenda-cambodia>; General Assembly, National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, Report of the Secretary-General, A/HRC/51/51, 12 July 2022, para 39, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/51/51>;

² Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Cambodia, CCPR/C/KHM/CO/3, 18 May 2022, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fKHM%2fCO%2f3&Lang=en

³ Report of the Special Rapporteur, *supra* note 1, para 10.