



**42<sup>nd</sup> Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council**  
**Item 10: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights  
Cambodia**

**Oral Statement Delivered by Rosanna Ocampo**  
**On behalf of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

**Wednesday, 25 September 2019**

Mr. President, FORUM-ASIA notes the report of the Special Rapporteur and agrees with her observation that there has been very little progress with respect to civil and political rights in Cambodia since last year's general elections. Wide-ranging legislative, judicial and regulatory measures introduced ahead of last year's elections have shut-down civic and democratic space in the country.

The dissolution of the main opposition party, the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), ahead of the elections has consolidated Cambodia effectively as a one-party state.

Several local and international NGOs have been banned under the restrictive Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations (LANGO) that remains a serious threat to freedom of association in Cambodia. A range of measures including the regulation on social media and lese majeste provisions added to the Criminal Code criminalise freedom of expression and restrict media freedom. The Trade Union Law imposes serious restrictions on collective bargaining and freedom of association of workers. The Law on Peaceful Demonstrations has been used to arbitrarily prohibit peaceful assembly.

The government's refusal over the past three years to conduct a credible investigation into the assassination of political analyst, Kem Ley, in July 2016 is emblematic of systemic failures and political bias in the judiciary and the police. Instead of pursuing investigations, the government has resorted to stifling calls for accountability for Kem Ley's murder. In July this year, two youth activists were charged with baseless allegation of incitement to commit a felony for staging a peaceful demonstration to commemorate the third anniversary of his murder.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the government's failure to include key human rights targets and indicators in its plan to implement Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicate its unwillingness to address these deep-rooted and systemic human rights concerns.

We call on Cambodia to end all attacks and reprisals against human rights defenders, civil society and independent media, and lift all restrictions on civic and democratic space. We call on Cambodia to provide a concrete timeline in consultation with civil society, the Special Rapporteur and OHCHR to amend all restrictive legislation and regulations including the Law on Political Parties, LANGO, and the Trade Union Law, as well as legislation to guarantee judicial independence in line with international standards. Thank you.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=443>