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From: Kayla Ermanni
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To: Kayla Ermanni
Subject: CNRM Praises Call for ASEAN Govts to Uphold Human Rights in Cambodia

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Cambodia National Rescue Movement Praises Open Letter Calling on ASEAN Governments to Uphold Human Rights in Cambodia

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Ahead of the 32nd ASEAN Summit in Singapore, the Cambodia National Rescue Movement (CNRM) applauded a group of regional Asian and international political organizations for releasing a letter calling on ASEAN governments to intervene in “the severe deterioration in the state of human rights and democracy in Cambodia in recent months.”

The letter urged Asian governments to devote their immediate attention to Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen’s egregious attacks on free speech, political opposition, freedom of association, and democracy. Citing the 1991 Paris Peace Accord that ended Cambodia’s 12-year war and mandated fair and free elections, the organizations called for a reconvening of “such a conference...that will outline concrete collective actions to reverse course in Cambodia, ahead of the elections in July.” The letter confirmed that without the reinstatement of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) and release of all political prisoners, including Mr. Kem Sokha, the elections will be illegitimate, and thus the international election observers should condition their presence with the participation of the opposition.

“We hope the ASEAN governments will live up to their earlier commitments to uphold peace and stability in Asia. It’s of the utmost urgency that the entire region act for democracy and human rights in Cambodia,” said **Mu Sochua, Vice President of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP)**. “July’s elections are a breaking point for Cambodian democracy and stability in the region. If Mr. Hun Sen heeds international calls to allow fair and free elections in July, he could restore the power to the Cambodian people. If he maintains his current path of ruthless and violent crackdowns on freedom and human rights, Cambodia will continue its descent into dictatorship. We must ensure these elections are free and fair, and the international community must play its part to hold Mr. Hun Sen and his regime accountable.”

The co-signers of the letter include the Human Rights Watch, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum-Asia), Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD), Asia Democracy Network, and National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. APHR also released an open letter calling on Asian leaders to urgently address pressing regional human rights concerns, including rampant human rights violations in Cambodia.

These letters come on the heels of calls from the international community to restore human rights and democracy in Cambodia, including from the United Nations, European Union, and the United States. In March, 45 countries signed a joint statement on the human rights situation in Cambodia, urging Hun Sen’s government to reinstate the CNRP and all elected members to their national seats and to allow the participation of all opposition parties in national elections. The CNRM has also called on Prime Minister Hun Sen to reinstate the CNRP, release Kem Sokha, and allow all opposition parties on the ballot by May 14 in order to ensure the elections in July are free and fair and avoid an illegitimate government.

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