

**United Nations Human Rights Council
33rd Regular Session, 13 September 2016 - 30 September 2016
Agenda Item 10**

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia

28 September 2016

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia.

The ICJ concurs with the Special Rapporteur's observation that "democratic space has been reduced in Cambodia through the application of a range of laws ... and the restriction of a range of legitimate activities of non-governmental and civil society organizations."

Since 2014, Cambodia has adopted laws inconsistent with its international human rights obligations, including undermining the independence of the judiciary, and unduly restricting the work of civil society.

Human rights defenders increasingly face retaliation for their legitimate work, shrinking civil society space.

Last week, the ICJ observed the criminal trial of Ny Chakrya, Deputy Secretary-General of the National Election Committee and former Head of Human Rights Section and Legal Aid at a leading NGO, ADHOC. He was convicted of crimes, including criminal defamation, for raising allegations of human rights violations. Ny Chakrya and four staff-members of ADHOC, all of whom are in detention, also face another investigation with all the hallmarks of being politically motivated.

Numerous members of the political opposition and human rights defenders are in exile, face legal proceedings, or have been convicted, in cases that also appear to be politically motivated.

The investigation into the July 2016 killing of leading human rights defender, Kem Ley, lacks transparency.

2016 marks 25 years since the Paris Peace Agreements under which Cambodia undertook to "ensure respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cambodia."

We urge Cambodia, the signatories to the Paris Peace Agreements, the Special Rapporteur on Cambodia, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Human Rights Council, to work to ensure these Agreements are given full effect - particularly as Cambodia prepares for local and national elections scheduled for 2017 and 2018.

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