



Permanent Mission
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HRC36

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Cambodia

German Statement

Mr. President,

Germany aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Germany is deeply concerned about increased restrictions on civil society, the media and the opposition in Cambodia.

Human rights defenders suffer from continued intimidation. Legislation, such as the Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (LANGO), as well as tax regulations, seem to be instrumentalized to silence critical voices. Several NGOs had to cease their operations. The freedom of speech and the freedom of the press – vital for a democratic society – are under threat: radio stations were suspended, one major English newspaper closed, authors of critical articles are repeatedly taken into custody.

Government actions against opposition politicians are of particular concern, as they threaten to undermine the democratic process ahead of next year's elections. We have observed the arrest of several party leaders including opposition leader Kem Sokha. The disrespect of the parliamentary immunity in his and other cases has to be considered as a violation of the rule of law.

We call on the government of Cambodia to take immediate and effective steps to reestablish an enabling environment for pluralistic views, as expressed by civil society, the media and opposition parties. In order to give credibility to next year's elections, government needs to allow for an open climate of debate. An important signal in this respect would be the release of Kem Sokha.

We would like to ask the Special Rapporteur:

NGOs should be valued as important partners in addressing controversial topics. They play an important role in the democratic process. How can we strengthen the civil society?

Thank you.