



30th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 10: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Cambodia, Ms Rhona Smith

Oral Statement Delivered by R. Iniyan Ilango
On behalf of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Tuesday, 29 September 2015

Mr. President, FORUM-ASIA, along with its Cambodian members, the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC) and the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (Licadho) note the Special Rapporteur's first visit to Cambodia¹ and her report. We call on the Council to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for another term of two years. FORUM-ASIA urges the government of Cambodia to fully cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and grant her full access during future visits.

Madam Special Rapporteur, we strongly register our opposition to the recent passage of the Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations (LANGO). The government of Cambodia enacted the law without the inclusion of civil society in the drafting process, despite repeated calls for transparency from UN experts as well as national and international groups². We reiterate that the law severely hampers the freedoms of association and expression, and its onerous registration and reporting obligations will threaten the pivotal role civil society groups play in Cambodia. We strongly urge the government of Cambodia to repeal the enacted law and withdraw pending draft laws that are not in line with international human rights laws and standards, including the Trade Union Law and the Cybercrime Law

Madam Special Rapporteur, judicial harassment and attacks against human rights defenders continue in Cambodia. For instance, prominent human rights defender Mr. Ny Chakrya is facing judicial harassment due to his activities as a human rights defender. He remains under judicial investigation in relation to his May 2015 public statement on the lack of independence of the Cambodian judiciary, to which two of ADHOC's clients had fallen victim, when they were arbitrarily arrested and detained.³ We strongly urge all responsible authorities to immediately drop all the charges against him and end such persecution.

In this context we call on the Special Rapporteur to elaborate on her views regarding the situation of human rights defenders in Cambodia, in particular with regard to the visibly shrinking democratic space that would allow human rights defenders to discharge their human rights work without fear of repercussions and to exercise their freedom of expression and assembly without fear of excessive use of force used by security forces or arbitrary arrests during protests. These concerns and the abuse of the judiciary by the government demand urgent protective action.

To conclude, the human rights situation in Cambodia has steadily deteriorated over the last few years. Strong and international scrutiny is necessary to address and stop this decline and prevent a crisis. We call on the UN to maintain its continued and sustained attention on Cambodia through this Council, the Special Rapporteur and the OHCHR country office

Thank you, Mr. President and Madam Special Rapporteur.

¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16416&LangID=E>

² <http://www.forum-asia.org/?p=19096>, <http://www.forum-asia.org/?p=19191>, <http://www.forum-asia.org/?p=19166>

³ <http://www.forum-asia.org/?p=19225>