



HRC26
Item6

Adoption of Cambodia's UPR Report:
Delivered by Renate Bloem

Thank you Mr. President,

CIVICUS welcomes Cambodia's adoption of a number of recommendations to create a more enabling environment for civil society and ensure that the rights to freedom of association, assembly and expressions are more firmly protected.

However, despite Cambodia's explicit commitments during its UPR examination, the government has simultaneously taken steps to limit the space for civil society and human rights defenders at the national level.

Increasing numbers of Cambodian human rights defenders, in particular land rights and environmental activists, are facing harassment and persecution for speaking out against the wide scale displacement of rural communities. While we welcome the recent decision to release prominent land rights activist Yorn Bopha on bail, we remain deeply concerned that the unwarranted charges against her have not been dropped.

We therefore urge the Government of Cambodia to take all necessary measures to implement recommendations it accepted to prevent the harassment of human rights defenders, journalists and NGOs. The right to democratic dissent must be considered sacrosanct.

We are also concerned about the debilitating effects of the proposed Law on Associations and NGOs, which, if adopted would severely constrain civil society in the country. We strongly urge the government to substantively consult with independent civil society groups to ensure that the law conforms to international best practice governing freedom of association.

Finally Mr. President, CIVICUS is deeply alarmed by the Cambodian government's increasingly repressive and hostile stance against peaceful protests in the country. In May 2014, the government's convicted 25 peaceful protestors and workers on questionable charges in an apparent attempt to silence independent dissent in the country. Moreover, the failure to prosecute security officials who use excessive and deadly force displays a severe lack of commitment to ensuring the full realization of the right to freedom of assembly without discrimination.

Accordingly, we call on the Cambodian government to fully implement recommendations it has accepted to protect workers exercising their rights without delay and we urge that Cambodian security forces abide by the international legal framework, in particular the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms.

Thank you Mr. President.