



Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

Unit 410 4/F La Fuerza Plaza 2, 2241 Don Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City 1231 Philippines
Tel: (+632) 8196071 • Fax: (+632) 8196055 • Email: info@cald.org • Website: www.cald.org

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Hon. Sam Rainsy

Former President, Cambodia National Rescue Party
Former Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

Dear Sam Rainsy:

Today, we learned that Cambodia's National Election Committee (NEC) already released the official results of the June 4 commune elections that show significant gains for the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP). It is in this light that we, on behalf of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD), would like to extend our warm congratulations for what CNRP has been able to achieve despite the odds stacked against the party.

The NEC results showed that the party was able to secure 489 out of the 1,646 commune chiefs (29.7%) and 5007 out of 11,572 commune councilors (43.3%). These are definitely a significant improvement from the 40 commune chiefs and 2955 commune councilors the party won in the last 2012 commune elections. Moreover, CNRP's share of popular votes these elections is at 43.8% (versus 50.8% of the ruling Cambodia People's Party or CPP), showing a swing of around 13% to the opposition.

While we recognize the opposition gains these elections, together with the significant improvements in the conduct of the electoral process, we are also aware that irregularities and issues occurred prior to the election which might have affected the fairness of the vote. A group of independent election watchdogs, for example, cited political suppression, the amendments to the political parties law, opaque campaign finances, biased courts, the intimidation of NGOs and military officials who openly campaigned for the CPP as issues that hindered them from calling the recent elections, "free and fair".

Much more needs to be done in this regard, but the fact that the Cambodian people showed overwhelming support to the CNRP despite these issues gives us reason to hope for a more democratic Cambodia in the future. As you may be aware, a delegation from CALD was in Phnom Penh during the recent elections, and the delegates were able to witness, firsthand, the enthusiasm and fervor of your people for democracy. They went back to their respective countries deeply inspired and moved by their experience in Cambodia. They also received well your message for the delegation, as delivered by CNRP Deputy Director for Public Affairs, Ms. Monovithya Kem.

Again, we send our sincerest congratulations. We expect great things for CNRP come the national elections next year. Long live the CNRP and Cambodian democracy!

Sincerely yours,

Abhisit Vejjajiva
CALD Chairperson
Former Prime Minister of Thailand

Kiat Sittheamorn
CALD Secretary General
Deputy Leader, Democrat Party of Thailand