



Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

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21 July 2020

Mu Sochua

Vice President

Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP)

Dear Madame Sochua:

We received an open letter regarding the campaign to end impunity and seek justice for the victims of state-backed killings in Cambodia. As chair of CALD, the only alliance of liberal and democratic parties in Asia, we fully support this campaign and we endorse this to our member-parties and partner organizations for circulation.

Cambodia has been long isolated from achieving the fruits of a democratic state as envisioned in the 1991 Paris Peace Accords, which was signed to end conflict and commence rehabilitation of the country. This agreement aimed to promote national reconciliation and ensure the exercise of the right to self-determination of the Cambodian people. However, the current situation of Cambodia is far from what the peace agreement aspired for.

Since the rise of Prime Minister Hun Sen into power more than three decades ago, the government and its institutions have been exploited to serve only one person. His tight grip resulted in abuse of authority and destroyed institutions established to provide the foundations for democratic and effective governance.

We understand the predicament in Cambodia right now. Apart from the silencing of dissent and the dissolution of the opposition, an atmosphere of fear pervades the country, and people are being subjected to systematic abuse without a credible mechanism for redress of grievances. Hun Sen has cultivated this environment over the years, which until now continues to thrive under the guise of democracy. We all know, however, that this democratic façade has masked the deaths of many Cambodians who fought hard for freedom and paid the ultimate price for it.

We will never forget the courage of Kem Ley, a Cambodian activist, physician and political commentator known for his political views, particularly on Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP). His assassination on 10 July 2016 sparked national and international outrage. We will never forget the bravery of Piset Pilika, a renowned ballet dancer and actress who was murdered on 6 July 1999; Chea Vichea, Cambodia's first trade union leader who was assassinated on 22 January 2004; Chut Wutty, a fearless environmentalist who was murdered on 26 April 2012; and a lot more

unsung heroes who only fought for what is right and just and lost their lives to state-sponsored impunity.

We pay our sincerest respects to the people of Cambodia for losing these champions of democracy. We believe that their legacy and their exemplary advocacies will continue to live on. We extend our full support in creating global awareness to seek justice for the journalists, activists, members of the military, trade union leaders, politicians, students, workers and innocent civilians who died under the Hun Sen government. We condemn the impunity of this autocratic government and its complete disregard for human lives.

CALD believes in justice - that justice will heal wounds and eventually uplift the indomitable spirit of the Cambodian people. We stand with Cambodians all over the world in fighting to end impunity and in conquering tyranny and fear. Together, we can move mountains and be victorious in bringing about lasting change in Cambodia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francis Pangilinan', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan

Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats
Senator, Republic of the Philippines