



CALD Statement No. 4, S. 2021

CALD vigorously opposes the politicized court verdict against Cambodian opposition leaders

CALD vigorously opposes the court verdict by the Phnom Penh Court on 1 March convicting the top nine leaders of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) of “attempt to organize a coup d’ état to overthrow the government.” All defendants face 20-25 year imprisonment.

The verdict was a result of mass trials conducted from November 2020 to February 2021 in the absence of the defendants and without reliable evidence presented and proper public hearing procedures. This is a clear violation of the procedural requirements of a fair trial as guaranteed in Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Cambodian Criminal Code. Everyone is entitled to a proper administration of justice and this recent court verdict robs the defendants of due process.

The right to a fair trial is a fundamental and universally recognized human right enshrined at the highest level by the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) and the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Article 10 of the UDHR states that, “Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.”

This verdict comes as the Hun Sen government continues to further silence dissent of any kind and obliterate the only opposition that, prior to its dissolution, was continuously gaining public support and momentum as evidenced by the results of previous electoral exercises.

CALD echoes the call of the CNRP for the international community to denounce, reject, and withdraw the court sentences. Moreover, CALD condemns the weaponization of the law against political opposition. The verdict is clearly politically motivated and is a wanton violation of human rights and the rule of law.

CALD calls on the Hun Sen government to cease any forms of state-capture and unconditionally release all political detainees. CALD also urges the government to drop all politically-motivated charges against the opposition and freely allow those in exile to return to Cambodia to be part of the national reconciliation efforts.



Finally, CALD appeals to the Hun Sen government to establish an inclusive dialogue with the all political stakeholders, including the main opposition leaders, and start leading the country towards a peaceful, economically secure and politically stable future.

For the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats:

Senator Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan (sgd.)

Chairperson

2 March 2021