



CALD Statement No. 2, S. 2022

The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) condemns in strongest terms the recent conviction of Cambodian human rights and democracy activist and lawyer Theary Seng.

Ms. Seng was convicted of “conspiracy to commit treason” and “incitement to create gross chaos impacting public security”, and was sentenced to six years in prison on these charges. She was reportedly taken to the notorious Prey Sar Prison outside Phnom Penh immediately after the conviction.

CALD strongly believes that the conviction of Ms. Seng was politically motivated and a result of her outspoken criticism of the Hun Sen regime and support of the political opposition. The charges against her have been routinely used in the past to silence, harass and intimidate anyone who dared to oppose the government. Her trial also did not meet the basic standards of due process as she was never presented with any information regarding the factual basis of the charges against her, making it difficult for her to launch an effective defense. In an interview that CALD did with her last year, she described her trial as “political theater...(where the) actors have to go by the script written by politicians.”

The conviction of Ms. Seng again demonstrates how the Hun Sen government has effectively weaponize the law against anyone who dissent and criticize the regime. The charges against her are clearly trumped-up, and her trial a sham.

CALD calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Ms. Seng and all political prisoners in Cambodia. Anything less is gross injustice.