

## From Hun Sen to Hun Manet: The worrying state of free speech in Cambodia



Despite a change in government in August, Cambodia's state of freedom of expression remains dim.

After almost four decades in power, Prime Minister Hun Sen stepped down from his position, replaced by his son Hun Manet, who vowed to prioritize peace and stability in the country.

The election's credibility was questionable since authorities cancelled the registration of the major opposition party on a mere issue of technicality. Attacks against independent media, opposition activists, and human rights defenders also intensified ahead of the July election.

The decline of media freedom and free speech in general was highlighted in the latest report of the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) which pointed out that the government “continued its worrying trend of over-policing free speech and silencing critical voices, a repression that was exacerbated ahead of the July 2023 general election.” It monitored how state officials filed legal actions against 16 journalists and 100 human rights defenders. It also documented the license revocation of five independent media outlets, including Global Voices’ partner, Voice of Democracy.