

57th session of the Human Rights Council
Item 10: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Cambodia
Statement by OMCT, CCHR, ADHOC

Thank you, Mr. President.

We remain deeply concerned about the escalating repression of dissent in Cambodia. In the first half of 2024, local human rights groups documented the arrest of at least 113 individuals, including political opposition members, journalists, human rights defenders, land rights activists and trade union leaders. Among these was the arbitrary arrest of Koet Saray, President of the Khmer Student Intelligent League Association (KSILA) in April 2024 for peacefully defending villagers in a land dispute.

This troubling trend continued with the sentencing of ten members of Mother Nature Cambodia to eight years in prison on July, 2, 2024, for "plotting" and "insulting the King". Five of these activists were violently arrested and are now detained far from their homes. Moreover, since late July, at least 95 people have been arrested for publicly criticizing the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam (CLV) agreement, aimed at strengthening economic cooperation among the three countries.

Civil society continues to face significant interference, with 10 of 21 meetings disrupted between January and July, and 39% of assemblies - particularly those on land rights - unjustly restricted.

We are further appalled by the lack of accountability in the enforced disappearance of Thai activist Wanchalearm Satsaksit, who was abducted in Phnom Penh in June 2020. Cambodian authorities announced the closure of the investigation in March 2024, citing insufficient evidence, yet no official notice has been provided to the Cambodian lawyer of Wanchalearm's family.

We urge Cambodia to release all detained human rights defenders, end judicial harassment, and ensure accountability for enforced disappearances. We call on the Human Rights Council members to hold Cambodia accountable to its international obligations and to foster an environment where all citizens can live without fear and fully participate in the democratic process.

Thank you.