



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING**

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

PRESS RELEASE

**Bilateral Meeting between H.E. Deputy Prime Minister PRAK Sokhonn
and
The Honorable Deputy Secretary Wendy Sherman**

On 11 May 2022, H.E. Mr. PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, held a bilateral meeting with The Honorable Wendy Sherman, Deputy Secretary of State of the United States of America, in the Department of State, Washington D.C., prior to the Special ASEAN-US Summit.

Excellency DPM acknowledged that in the over 70 years of relations, despite some differences, there has been genuinely strong and consistent endeavour to deepen friendship and cooperation between the two countries. Trade is the best example of the excellent cooperation, benefitting both sides especially the dominant women workers in garment, footwear and travel goods sectors. Other important areas include, inter alia, fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, MIA/POW, counter-terrorism, repatriation, peacekeeping operations, cultural cooperation specifically the preservation and protection of cultural heritages.

The Honorable Deputy Secretary saluted Cambodia for the impressive vaccination efforts and expressed appreciation for Cambodia's principled actions in supporting the United Nations General Assembly's resolutions on Ukraine, taking into account of the principles of respect for territorial integrity and avoidance of the use of force against all UN member states. She expressed the US' support for Cambodia's year as ASEAN Chair and thanked Cambodia for her support in coordinating the upcoming ASEAN-US Special Summit. She also expressed appreciation to Excellency Deputy Prime Minister for undertaking the role of the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar and urged for inclusive engagement with all parties concerned. The Honorable Deputy Secretary also raised some concerns regarding the development of Ream Naval base and the situation of Cambodia's democracy.



In response, Excellency Deputy Prime Minister opined that through the painful experiences from the thirty years of conflict and genocide, Cambodia has taken a consistent approach to protect peace, and respect for international law and UN Charter in the conduct of her foreign policy, particularly with regards to Myanmar and the conflict in Ukraine.

On the development of Ream Naval Base, he reassured Cambodia's adherence to her own Constitutional principles in forbidding the presence of foreign military presence. The gesture made by Cambodia in allowing many visits to the base is unprecedented from any country's military perspective.

On the state of democracy, he explained that despite being young, Cambodia has conducted regular elections since 1993, and those elections were observed as free, fair, transparent, peaceful and orderly by local and international observers. Multi-party liberal democracy has always been reflected in those elections and the upcoming commune election offers platform for 17 parties to compete. Two thousand printed and digital media outlets, more than 6000 NGOs, and more than 6000 unions with some factories have 5 unions in a single factory, are factual illustration of Cambodia's space for freedoms and democratic culture. He, nonetheless, argued that rights and freedom should not prejudice obligations to respect the law.

Excellency DPM also thanked the US' support for the works of the Special Envoy on Myanmar, and reiterated his commitment to request for meetings with all parties concerned, especially those in Myanmar namely Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and former president Win Myint, to advance the priorities on cessation of violence, delivery of humanitarian assistance and engendering inclusive political dialogue. Cambodia will continue her commitment to a step-by-step and action-oriented approach through trust and confidence building exercises among different stakeholders.

Phnom Penh, 12 May 2022

