



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING**

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**Statement of the Spokesman of
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation is utterly dismayed by the latest comments of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Situation in Cambodia Professor Rhona Smith, which were written on the Facebook page of the OHCHR Cambodia Office, voicing her concerns over the legality of abstaining from voting and alleged threat to withhold public services to those who do not vote for the ruling party in the run-up to the parliamentary elections in Cambodia.

The timing and motivation of her remarks merit several questions due to their substantive bias and prejudice in the context of electoral sensitivity in Cambodia. It appears that her call is supportive to a coordinated campaign of Mr. Sam Rainsy and members of the legally-dissolved party CNRP, which seek to sabotage a democratic contest in Cambodia by encouraging the electoral boycott among the voters and teaching them how to spoil ballots on the voting day.

Unlike some countries, Cambodia does not have any law punishing the people who do not cast their vote. However, Cambodia's election law penalizes those who prevent others from going to vote as set forth in its Article 142.

The Special Rapporteur seems to lose sight of dangerous populism of Mr. Sam Rainsy and his squad, who call on military rebellion against the government, incite racial hatred and xenophobia, and provoke ultra-nationalism jeopardizing peaceful relations with one of Cambodia's neighbors. Such methods do not bear a semblance of the democracy and are well condemned in any democratic society.

In this connection, the Ministry notes with deep regret that the Special Rapporteur has never ever publicly deplored the above-said undemocratic conducts. Fair and objective observation of the electoral process should underline the nature of an unhealthy opposition which aims to disrupt the hard-earned peace, political stability and development in Cambodia. In this regard, the Ministry urges the Special Rapporteur to strictly adhere to " the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council " and " the Manual of Operations of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council ' .

With regard to the reports that local authorities have threatened to withhold public services to those who do not vote for the ruling party, the Ministry would like to reiterate that the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia guarantees all Cambodian citizens' enjoyment of all public services without any restriction regardless of their political affiliation and social status.

Phnom Penh, 23 July 2018

