



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING**



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

PRESS STATEMENT

“FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE”

**“The credibility of the Human Rights Watch has long been tarnished,”
states the Foreign Ministry’s Spokesperson**

Phnom Penh, 14 September 2023 – In light of inaccurate, biased, and misleading narratives propagated by the Human Rights Watch (HRW), the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation finds it imperative to present some factual accounts.

1. The presumption of a continual decline in Cambodia’s human rights situation is neither balanced, objective, nor proportionate. The HRW’s emphasis on civil and political rights to the detriment of other fundamental rights, including the right to life, health, food, education, and development, is contrary to the UN standard. The UN’s principles of treating all human rights equally on the same footing with the same emphasis must be upheld.
2. The deliberate omission of Cambodia’s numerous achievements exemplifies the HRW’s biased narrative. Cambodia’s success stories, including economic growth, poverty reduction, enhanced livelihood, expanding social protection measures for vulnerable groups, an exemplary Covid-19 vaccination program, improved literacy rates, malaria eradication, and advancements in judicial and legal reform, have been systematically disregarded.
3. Cambodia’s commendable progress in implementing the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is evident, with 72.5% of the

country's SDGs indicators and sub-indicators on track. Notably, a Western ambassador in Phnom Penh recently lauded Cambodia as "an economic miracle".

4. The claim that the 2023 general election was conducted within a severely restricted space is unequivocally false. The fact is that the election with 18 competing political parties underscored Cambodia's democratic maturity, with an impressive voter participation rate of nearly 85%. This record turnout is a testament to the citizens' trust in the electoral process and their rejection of calls for electoral boycotts by the extremist politicians. Statements from national and international observers, representing 65 nationalities, confirmed the election was conducted in a free, fair, transparent, peaceful, and inclusive manner and in strict adherence with the applicable laws.
5. The HRW consistently turns a blind eye to the dangerous and extremist rhetoric of certain elements within the opposition. They spread disinformation, engage in indiscriminate insults and slanders, incite violence and racial hatred, and openly call on sedition. Such actions are contrary to the principles of responsible discourse and democracy.
6. The credibility of the Human Rights Watch has long been tarnished, dating back to 2014 when a former UN Assistant Secretary-General and two Nobel Peace Laureates, along with over 100 scholars, publicly criticized this organization for its inherent bias and double standards. END

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