



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Press Release

Outcomes of the meeting between His Excellency PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia

On 1 July 2021, at 15:30 pm, His Excellency PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, virtually received Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn, a new Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia. The dialogue centered around international and regional cooperation; Covid-19 and its consequences; and civic and democratic space.

Considering himself as a good friend of Cambodia, Prof. Vitit emphasized his great respect for the Kingdom. He congratulated Cambodia on broad and wide-ranging cooperation in human rights mechanisms, namely ratification of most human rights conventions, engagement in treaty body, Universal Periodic Review and special rapporteurs, and significant progress in social and economic rights.

H.E. Deputy Prime Minister congratulated Prof. Vitit Muntarbhorn on his appointment as the new Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, welcomed his respectful approach, and reaffirmed Cambodia's cooperation in working closely with the Special Rapporteur.

Both sides also exchanged views on the preparation of Cambodia's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2022 and some relevant potential initiatives.



On the Covid-19 pandemic, H.E. Deputy Prime Minister briefed Cambodia's sweeping measures and strategies to respond to this health crisis and to cushion its socio-economic impact upon the vulnerable, among others, cash transfer program, food supplies during the lockdown and vaccinations. The priority of the government is to secure rights to life, survival and health along with social stability and public health. In response, Prof. Vitit welcomed the cash transfer scheme and free national inoculation rollout in Cambodia.

As to the civic and democratic space, H.E. Deputy Prime Minister stressed that any assessment of Cambodia should bear in mind where it comes from and where it stands now. Various mechanisms were put in place to build a closer government-CSO partnership. Democracy is not a sprint rather a long-distance running. All legislative and administrative measures are enforced within the boundaries of the law. Charges brought before the courts involve criminal and constitutional breach. The defendants have full opportunity to be heard and to disprove the indictment as part of the rights to due process.

This is the sixth meeting that Prof. Vitit Muntarbhorn has had with Cambodian dignitaries of the Royal Government of Cambodia since his assumption of this mandate. The new Special Rapporteur has interacted with representatives of Ministry of Interior, Cambodia Human Rights Committee, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth, and Ministry of Justice. Prof. Vitit thanked the Royal Government of Cambodia for facilitating the said open and constructive conversations, demonstrating the good cooperation that Cambodia has accorded to his mandate.

Phnom Penh, 01 July 2021

