

**Statement on the UPR Pre-session on the
Cambodia
Freedom of Expression, Press Freedom, Digital
Rights, and Access to Information
13 February 2024,
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Freedom of Expression and Press Freedom

Issues:

- In 2022 alone, 37 SLAPPs (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) filed against 79 individuals on account of their exercise of freedom of expression.
- The Press Law contains some key protections for the media but also has several notable flaws.
- The closure of Voice of Democracy (VOD) in February 2023
- In a three-year period (2020-2022), CamboJA documented a total of 119 incidents of harassment of journalists
- Government did create a lawyers committee in the Ministry of Information in 2020 to assist journalists facing lawsuits.

Freedom of Expression and Press Freedom

Ask:

- Introduce concrete actions to address all the recommendations provided in the 3rd cycle review which the Cambodian government has already accepted and noted. For example, the amendment of incitement crime, repeal the lèse majesté offense, public defamation, and public insult.
- Hold meaningful consultations on draft laws which impact freedom of expression to allow civil society to provide inputs and to ensure alignment with the ICCPR.

Digital Rights

Issues:

- While the Cambodian government has yet to meet the recommendations, we have observed that additional sub-decrees and drafted cyber-related laws have been established and drafted.

Ask:

- To respond to the accepted and noted recommendations from the 3rd cycle by repealing the Sub-decree on National Internet Gateway, Telecommunications Law, Penal Code and Inter-ministerial Praks No. 170 to ensure that Cambodia fully respects the right to freedom of expression.
- To amend the Sub-decree on a National Domain Name
- To disclose the cybercrime draft law and to open for meaningful consultation on the draft cybersecurity, and personal data protection laws with CSOs and public.

Access to Information

Issues:

- Cambodia has yet to adopt Access to Information law, despite its support of recommendations from member states.
- Currently, the public and journalists, have access to government-held information sporadically and at the discretion of the relevant public authority

Ask:

- Enact an access to information law that aligns with international standards, as recommended in prior UPRs, by the end of 2024.