

The Universal Periodic Review Factsheet: Freedom of Expression

Introduction to the UPR

- [The Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#), established in 2006, is a process to evaluate the human rights records of all UN Member States and operates on the principles of universality, non-discrimination, and equality.
- The UN Human Rights Council (HRC) carries out the review, which involves an interactive dialogue between the State under review, the 47 current HRC Member States, and observer States.
- Cambodia has undergone two UPRs, the first in 2009 and the second in 2014; at its last UPR, Cambodia accepted 163 recommendations, meaning it has committed to implement them, and noted 42. It will have its next review in 2018.

Concerns Related to Freedom of Expression

- The large majority of media outlets is controlled by the State or individuals connected with the ruling party.
- Those critical of the government are often handed defamation lawsuits, or are arrested on trumped up civil or criminal charges; the Internet is also policed, and citizens have been brought to court on defamation charges for posting content deemed critical of the government or of state agencies on their personal social media accounts.
- Journalists, human rights defenders, protesters, and opposition politicians are not free from harassment, intimidation, and, on occasion, death threats.

Important UPR Recommendations on Freedom of Expression

- **118.101** In line with its commitment under the previous UPR cycle, work towards ensuring free access to the electronic media and liberalize the electronic media ownership rules by drafting a cyber law in accordance with international standards (recommended by Hungary).
- **118.102** Ensure that the concept of defamation and disturbance of public order is in line with the human right to freedom of expression in law and practice (recommended by Germany).
- **118.104** Promote a safe and favourable environment that allows individuals and groups to exercise the freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly and put an end to harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrests and physical attacks, particularly in the context of peaceful demonstrations (recommended by Switzerland).

Recommendations for the RGC

- ✓ Engage with all stakeholders – including journalists, NGOs, CSOs, opposition politicians, and others – in the implementation of recommendations;
- ✓ Establish clear indicators, in conjunction with civil society, to determine progress for each accepted recommendation; and
- ✓ Ask for technical assistance and support, when necessary, from OHCHR and relevant stakeholders during the implementation process.