

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Cambodia: Closure of UN Office Threatens Rights Efforts

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch strongly condemn the public statements by senior officials of the government of Cambodia demanding the removal of the director of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Cambodia, Christophe Peschoux, and stating the government intends to force the closure of that office.

From our close knowledge of the work of the OHCHR Cambodia office, we reject as baseless the statements attributed to Foreign Minister Hor Nam Hong that the office has acted as a “spokesperson for the opposition party.” This attack by the government on the OHCHR Cambodia office should be seen as a direct assault on the UN’s human rights mandate, encompassed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international human rights conventions, many of which Cambodia has ratified.

We expect the leadership of the United Nations to continue to speak out in support of the OHCHR Cambodia office, its representative, and staff. Donor governments to Cambodia should likewise voice their strong objections to the Cambodian government’s statements. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who will visit Cambodia on October 31 and November 1, should publicly express support for the OHCHR Cambodia office and the UN’s human rights mandate. Both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International will continue to closely monitor the situation in Cambodia and expose human rights violations and promote accountability.

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