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## ORAL STATEMENT

### ITEM 10: Inter-active dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Cambodia ENDING ALL THREATS, DETENTION AND PROSECUTION OF ACTIVISTS, JOURNALISTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN CAMBODIA

UN Human Rights Council  
Thirty-ninth session

10-28 September 2018

Mr. President,

Amnesty International shares the concerns of the Special Rapporteur over continued blatant attacks of rights to freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly by the Cambodian government.

During the pre-election period, Cambodian authorities threatened, detained and prosecuted activists, journalists, human rights defenders and dissidents over spurious charges for their human rights work or simply for a difference of opinion.

We recognize the fact that 20 such prisoners have been released since Cambodia's national election in July. However, most of those released still have pending criminal charges and sentences that could be resumed anytime. Hun Sen himself has warned his critics to stay quiet.

The shut-down of over 30 radio stations in 2017 for carrying independent news broadcasts continues to hinder the public from receiving information from alternative sources. The crackdown on social media platforms has left many individuals prosecuted with trumped-up charges for simply exercising their freedom of expression.

Amnesty International also shares the concern of the Special Rapporteur over repressive legal changes made in Cambodia over the last five years. These include changes to the Political Parties Law to give courts arbitrary powers to dissolve parties, and changes to the trade unions law effectively criminalizing workers' strikes. The laws governing NGOs also give the Interior Ministry

similar powers over civil society, “resulting in self-censorship by many organizations.” These legislations constitute an ever-growing threat on what remains of the civic space.

Amnesty International calls on the international community to take concrete measures to address the continuing degradation of the human rights situation in Cambodia. The international community should call on the Cambodian government to immediately release all prisoners of conscience, revoke all charges and convictions against persons released without conditions, end the suppression of independent media, and amend or repeal all repressive laws.

Thank you.