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Cambodia: King should reject Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations

Amnesty International’s Secretary General, Salil Shetty, has written to His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni, Cambodia’s monarch, calling on him to reject the draft Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (LANGO).

The LANGO was passed by Cambodia’s National Assembly on 13 July 2015 and is expected to be reviewed by the Senate on 24 July.

The letter, addressed to the King and referring to his constitutional role as the protector of rights and freedoms for all citizens and as the guarantor of international treaties, was delivered today, 23 July.

The letter states that “if it becomes law, the LANGO will violate the rights and freedoms of people throughout Cambodia and will place [Cambodia] in violation of the international treaties to which it is a party”. The letter highlights concerns that the LANGO will “place restrictions on the rights to freedom of association and expression that are in violation of international standards and will badly undermine the right of individuals to take part in the life of the nation”.

Amnesty International wrote to King Sihamoni in advance of the Senate review of the LANGO because past practice has shown that the Senate is likely to endorse the National Assembly’s decision to pass the draft law.

Background

The LANGO will violate a number of human rights guaranteed by Cambodia’s Constitution as well as international human rights treaties to which Cambodia is a party, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These human rights include the right to freedom of expression and of association.

Since 13 July, when the National Assembly approved the LANGO, demonstrations have taken place in 13 provinces across the country, calling on the Senate to reject the draft law.

The opposition Sam Rainsy Party (SRP), which holds 11 of the Senate’s 61 seats, has stated that it will boycott the Senate vote, expected to take place on 24 July. The ruling Cambodian People’s Party holds 46 seats in the Senate.

Amnesty International has recently signed two joint letters, to the National Assembly and the Prime Minister respectively, which outline the organization’s concerns arising from the LANGO:


ENDS

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