

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Amnesty International to Cambodia's political parties: Stop forced evictions

All political parties contesting the 27 July elections should let the voters know how they plan to address forced evictions, Amnesty International said today as election campaigning was well underway ahead of the 27 July poll.

Forced evictions are one of Cambodia's biggest human rights problems, affecting both urban and rural populations across the country, perpetuating marginalization and deepening poverty. The ongoing election campaign presents an opportunity for Cambodians to hear what their future leaders have to say about their human rights.

The issues of land rights and tenure security have received some attention during the election campaign. Nevertheless, the parties could go further and clarify how they plan to protect the rights of the tens of thousands Cambodian who have been forcibly evicted in recent years and as many as 150,000 Cambodians living at risk of forced eviction.

Amnesty International called on the 11 political parties registered with the National Election Commission to publicly state that they will stop forced evictions and to add the following commitments to their party platforms:

* Stop forced evictions and introduce a moratorium for all mass evictions until legislation and policy is put into place that requires any further evictions to be conducted in full compliance with international human rights laws and standards;

* Ensure that those victimised by forced evictions have access to, at the very least, minimum essential levels of shelter, clean water, sanitation, health services and education, including through the provision of humanitarian assistance where necessary.

* Abide by its obligations under international human rights law to give those affected by eviction an opportunity for genuine participation and consultation.

Background

A forced eviction is 'the permanent or temporary removal against the will of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection,' according to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Forced evictions have been recognized by the UN Commission on Human Rights as a gross violation of human rights, and are intrinsically associated with violations of other human rights.

As a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and other international human rights treaties which prohibit forced eviction and related human rights violations, Cambodia has an obligation to stop forced evictions and to protect the population from further forced evictions.

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