



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-03054**

BY: **MR. MCKINNON (COQUITLAM-PORT COQUITLAM)**

DATE: **DECEMBER 7, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **SIGNED BY THE HONOURABLE CHRYSIA FREELAND**

Response by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

CAMBODIA

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law have been integral parts of Canada's bilateral relations with Cambodia.

Canada is deeply concerned by the anti-democratic actions taken by the Government of Cambodia. The November 2017 dissolution of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) by the Supreme Court and the arrest of its leader are deliberate attempts to limit alternate political views, and the targeting of media and NGOs are signs of the government's growing disregard for the democratic process.

In response to these troubling developments, Global Affairs Canada released a statement on July 29, 2018, the day of the general elections, calling for the release of CNRP leader Kem Sokha. Canada expressed its deep concerns about these undemocratic elections, noting that the election campaign was widely recognized to have been marred by voter intimidation and manipulation of the polls.

On September 9, 2018, Kem Sokha was released on bail from prison after a year of detention, under conditions tantamount to house arrest with highly restricted communications privileges.

Following the latter development, the Government of Canada issued a tweet on September 10, 2018, acknowledging Mr. Kem Sokha's release from prison but calling for the baseless and arbitrary charges against him to be dropped. The Government of Canada further urged the Government of Cambodia to reinstate the CNRP and to hold free and fair elections.

Canada will continue to raise these issues with Cambodia at all levels, and advocate for the acquittal of Kem Sokha, and for the ban on 118 senior members of the CNRP to be lifted.

Our government remains committed to promoting international justice and respect for human rights, and to combatting corruption, including in Cambodia.