

Greeting from COMFREL,

[Weekly Democracy and Electoral Digest Cambodia](#)

14-18 January 2019

1. NEC and Elections

Prime Minister Hun Sen has issued a sub-decree increasing the amount of commanders of election security forces for the upcoming sub-national election in May.

<https://bit.ly/2svAvvb>;

The National Election Committee will file a complaint to Battambang Provincial Court asking it to issue warrants to arrest three former opposition party officials for failing to pay fines over an election boycott campaign during the July 29 national election.

<https://bit.ly/2sB26eg>;

2-International Community

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for South and Southeast Asia Joseph H. Felter wrapped up his official trip to Cambodia this week by warning of China's military presence in Cambodia and calling for democratic reform. US senators have urged Cambodia to reverse course and reinstate the country's main opposition party or face the possibility of trade sanctions.

<https://bit.ly/2W0YfVB>; <https://bit.ly/2CyrzcW>;

The European Union will impose a tax on rice from Cambodia and Myanmar for three years, beginning at the end of the week, after an investigation found that "a significant increase" in imports of the grain from the two countries "caused economic damage" to European producers.

<https://bit.ly/2VXa0MR>; <https://bit.ly/2S0WXed>; <https://bit.ly/2sxFcoc>; <https://bloom.bg/2FLI34Z>;
<https://reut.rs/2DiMq5J>;

Chinese Ambassador Wang Wentian yesterday said Prime Minister Hun Sen's upcoming state visit to China will further improve the relationship between both countries, while pushing in-depth development forward.

<https://bit.ly/2DhIsdG>;

Cambodia and Vietnam are determined to prevent cross-border crimes and resolve any problems peacefully based on respect for each other's independence and sovereignty, the Interior Ministry said yesterday.

<https://bit.ly/2T1FBea>;

Thailand has commended Cambodia for moving to annul diplomatic passports held by foreign nationals after it emerged that former Thai prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra was issued one when she fled the

country in 2017.

<https://bit.ly/2Fw7jNj>;

3- Political Party

Kong Korm and his son Kong Bora were granted for rehabilitation– the first of 118 opposition officials banned from politics for five years to request a royal decree – allowing them to return to the political fold.

Mr. Kong Bora yesterday said that he would return to work for the Agriculture Ministry just two days after he and his father had their ban on politics lifted.

<https://bit.ly/2MjiegJl>; <https://bit.ly/2ARNY>; <https://bit.ly/2HvuR6P>;
<https://bit.ly/2CsZYK9>;<https://bit.ly/2MhX2Vh>;

The rift between former opposition leaders Sam Rainsy and Kem Sokha is becoming more apparent as supporters of the latter slammed Mr Rainsy yesterday for planning to host a CNRP meeting in the United States on Sunday.

<https://bit.ly/2RW6qmW>;

Two local media organizations are demanding an apology from the leader of the Khmer Rise Party over criticism made during a meet between journalists and Prime Minister Hun Sen on Friday.

<https://bit.ly/2QYn5BA>;

Sam Serey, exiled leader of the Khmer National Liberation Front, on blasted former opposition leader Sam Rainsy for actively encouraging international sanctions against Prime Minister Hun Sen's government.

<https://bit.ly/2QXrqoy>;

4-Legislative and Executive

Prime Minister Hun Sen on Saturday told former Irish premier Enda Kenny, still a member of the EU nation's parliament, that the 28-nation bloc should not make a "third mistake" regarding Cambodia by using the preferential Everything But Arms (EBA) agreement to "take 16 million Cambodians hostage".

He reached the milestone of 34 years as Cambodian prime minister on Monday and used the groundbreaking ceremony for a new ring road around Phnom Penh to tell the international community that putting sanctions on the Kingdom meant killing the opposition.

He responded to environmental activists who accused the government of inaction over deforestation in Cambodia, saying they themselves used luxury wood to build and decorate their own homes.

<https://bit.ly/2TOAXAe>; <https://bit.ly/2Mf8EIA>; <https://bit.ly/2HhsWCD>;

<https://bit.ly/2Fz6vXW>; <https://bit.ly/2Csi8M9>; <https://bit.ly/2RQYTG2>;

Minister of Interior Sar Kheng on Thursday said the government did not consider civil society organizations as being opposition groups, which intended to overthrow the current administration via a

“color revolution”.

<https://bit.ly/2FKXf2h>;

A senior Ministry of National Defense official said the Tuesday meeting between the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for South and Southeast Asia Joseph H Felter and General Neang Phat had helped strengthen relations between the two countries’ militaries. However, a senior Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) official hit back at the US’ requests for the release of former opposition leader Kem Sokha and greater democracy in the Kingdom as a violation of Cambodia’s sovereignty and independence.

<https://bit.ly/2VTzudM>; <https://bit.ly/2DhAMb6>; <https://bit.ly/2FGFSzm>;

Three of Cambodia’s top leaders used the Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) to warn that small- and medium-sized countries were facing geopolitical challenges due to the machinations of powerful states.

<https://bit.ly/2RBiniy>; <https://bit.ly/2sySBN2>; <https://bit.ly/2AUjiQH>; <https://bit.ly/2CsxfFC>;
<https://bit.ly/2RJLejS>; <https://bit.ly/2sxdnfN>; <https://bit.ly/2FG4kB2>; <https://bit.ly/2st1qla>;

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation will move to annul diplomatic passports issued to those not born in Cambodia.

<https://bit.ly/2TYZDGs>; <https://bit.ly/2HhPfrR>;

A senior Labour Ministry official is urging further cooperation for the prevention of strikes and demonstrations among factory workers.

<https://bit.ly/2QUaSOo>;

5- Civil Society

Phnom Penh Municipal Hall spokesman Met Meas Pheakdey told The Post on Monday that it will likely allow a ceremony marking the 15th anniversary of the murder of union leader Chea Vichea, adding that the decision is subject to Governor Khung Sreng’s approval.

<https://bit.ly/2DiLb6N>;

Eleven former teachers filed a complaint at the Phnom Penh Municipal Court on Wednesday against their sacking by Minister of Education, Youth and Sport Hang Chuon Naron last January, for being absent without permission.

<https://bit.ly/2QYCVMG> ; <https://bit.ly/2QWxygP>;

Some 10 environmental activists from Phnom Penh universities have urged Preah Sihanouk provincial authorities to restore the part of Prek Treng beach which a private company filled in September, while the governor claimed the firm had already been ordered to do so.

<https://bit.ly/2SZhA7G>;

More than 2,000 garment workers from Kingmakers (Cambodia) Footwear in Svay Rieng province’s Bavet city yesterday held a protest to demand 50 percent of their monthly wages after the company

announced it was suspending work for a month.

<https://bit.ly/2AN9gAD>;

More than 1,000 garment workers have lost their jobs following days of protest calling for wages to be paid for December.

<https://bit.ly/2W0YsYT>;

6- Media

Prime Minister Hun Sen raised cyber-security and access to information in his address to nearly 5,000 participants at the correspondents' dinner held on Friday in Phnom Penh.

<https://bit.ly/2RGIULN>;

Information Minister Khieu Kanharith on Monday called on the public to help officials monitor fake news in order to prevent it from impacting society and affecting public security

<https://bit.ly/2T3aXRK>;

7-Judiciary, Authority and Military

An outspoken opposition activist was arrested on Wednesday and accused of various offences, including insulting the government, inciting discrimination and attempting to overthrow the government, after he made criticisms on Facebook.

<https://bit.ly/2API45K>; <https://bit.ly/2MiJnxs>; <https://bit.ly/2TWXhle>;

Royal Cambodian Armed Forces Deputy Commander-in-chief Sao Sokha said on Monday that security and social order last year was calm and that felony and misdemeanor crimes were down on 2017. However, strikes and protests increased.

<https://bit.ly/2swEwPZ>;

8- Other and Political Opinions

The Cambodian navy last week hosted a lavish reception for three Chinese warships that docked in the southern port of Sihanoukville. The visit follows denials by the Cambodian government over claims that China was seeking to create a de facto military base off Cambodia's southern coast.

<https://bit.ly/2W4je9M>; <https://bit.ly/2QWjmof>;

Thanks,