

Greeting from COMFREL,

Weekly Democracy and Electoral Digest Cambodia

28 Jan. to 1 Feb. 2019

1.Elections/ NEC

The number of district, town, provincial and municipal council members will increase to 819 when elections are called for their third mandate on May 26, said a sub-decree issued on January 25 and received by The Post on Sunday.

The National Election Committee called on political parties and election officials to ensure fairness in the upcoming sub-national council election but the sub national election system is not for the political competition.

<https://bit.ly/2BbLChM>; <https://bit.ly/2CYl2c0>; <https://bit.ly/2HIWtW2>; <https://bit.ly/2WzVBGm>;

2-International Community

The United States' top intelligence official has said Washington is wary of a possible Chinese military presence in Cambodia.

US lawmakers have said they are optimistic that a new bill to impose sanctions on Cambodia will be passed by Congress given the strong support it received last year. The US Embassy in Cambodia on Thursday claimed on its official Facebook page that there was no evidence the US government was involved in the 1970 Cambodian coup d'état that precipitated much of the unrest that ravaged the country in the years after.

<https://bit.ly/2DNC9Pi>; <https://bit.ly/2CZfkqb>; <https://bit.ly/2G1UoD0>;

The final day for the EU Commission for Trade is to receive the opinions of the EU bloc's 28 member-states before deciding whether to suspend the Everything But Arms (EBA) tariff preferences for Cambodia.

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

3- Political Party

The former senior adviser to the Supreme Court-dissolved Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), Kong Korm, has been named the honorary president of the Khmer Will Party (KWP).

<https://bit.ly/2GdidXJ>; <https://bit.ly/2RZvRVy>;

Members of Cambodia's former opposition called on EU leaders continue to apply pressure to the Cambodian government. The exiled members of banned Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) have told Al Jazeera they are planning to return to [Cambodia](#) in the next few months. Former opposition party vice president Eng Chhai Eang has urged supporters to donate money in a bid to raise \$300,000

within three months to arrange for Sam Rainsy's return to Cambodia.

<https://bit.ly/2HH0077>; <https://bit.ly/2G1dlpd>; <https://bit.ly/2sXuQOP>;

Phnom Penh Municipal Court has upheld an Interior Ministry's decision rejecting the appointment of Prince Norodom Chakravuth as acting Funcinpec party president and the sacking of high-ranking party officials last year.

<https://bit.ly/2WA0Gij>;

4-Legislative and Executive

Following an announcement by Prime Minister Hun Sen on Friday that sub-national administrations will soon be streamlined, that the measure will improve efficiency and effectiveness in governance at a local level.

<https://bit.ly/2D0IViP>; <https://bit.ly/2Uz8DT1>;

Prime Minister Hun Sen has urged all Cambodians to protect hard-earned peace and oppose any possible interference into internal affairs by foreign countries, citing a political crisis in Venezuela where an opposition leader took power from the incumbent president.

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

The Cambodia Human Rights Committee (CHRC) led a delegation to participate in the 32nd Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN in Geneva, Switzerland, for the third time, it said in a press release issued on Friday. It said Cambodia had already submitted documents last November for the review.

<https://bit.ly/2S2vFVx>; <https://bit.ly/2G0GMYw>; <https://bit.ly/2sYZneZ>; <https://bit.ly/2Bd7k4K>;
<https://bit.ly/2UrLj9w>;

Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng said on Sunday there is a 50 per cent possibility that outlawed opposition leader Sam Rainsy would return to Cambodia as his diplomatic measures abroad had reached a dead-end.

<https://bit.ly/2DFM2hL>;

Defense Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Tea Banh on Wednesday criticized those urging foreign countries to cancel Cambodia's Everything But Arms (EBA) trade preferences with the EU, saying they were looking for a "colour revolution". He singled out former opposition leader Sam Rainsy by calling him a liar, reiterating his stance against Mr Rainsy and any movement aiming to resurrect the dissolved CNRP. The ministry also issued a statement strongly condemning self-exiled former opposition leader Sam Rainsy for appealing to the Cambodian army to rise against the government.

<https://reut.rs/2RZInUS>; <https://bit.ly/2Gdf1ve>; <https://bit.ly/2RXKoku>; <https://bit.ly/2DOamy7>

5- Civil Society

Some 100 villagers from Preah Vihear province on Monday protested at the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, seeking a resolution to their long-running land dispute, as well as the release of 13 villagers who have been detained for alleged land grabbing.

<https://bit.ly/2UtVomk>; <https://bit.ly/2MLTdYB>;

A prominent anti-corruption activist yesterday urged the government to properly address corruption in the Kingdom. Cambodia's score in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index has slipped by one point placing the Kingdom 161 out of 180 countries surveyed, the same position it had the previous year.

<https://bit.ly/2BbMdQy>; <https://bit.ly/2RZr4U4>; <https://bit.ly/2CZg5zx>; <https://bit.ly/2Smx88k>;

The Ministry of Interior and the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) are to conduct a census aimed at ascertaining the exact number of registered civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Kingdom, the ministry's General Department of Administration director-general Prak Sam Oeun told The Post on Monday.

<https://bit.ly/2sV7Yzm>;

6- Media

The Cambodian government on Friday strongly urged Singaporean outlet Channel News Asia (CNA) to issue a correction to an article it published on Thursday, claiming Prime Minister Hun Sen had called on the military to destroy the country's political opponents.

<https://bit.ly/2G70e52>;

Minister of Information Khieu Kanharith on Friday said Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA) would be allowed to reopen their offices only after fulfilling their tax obligations.

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

7-Judiciary, Authority and Military

Mixed security forces in the southern Cambodian province of Preah Sihanouk opened fire on protesters on Thursday after they burned tires, threw makeshift Molotov cocktails and blocked roads sparked by a Supreme Court decision to award a land title to several local families.

The National Military Police has established a fact-finding commission to investigate the use of firearms during a clash between police and residents over a 71-hectare land dispute in Preah Sihanouk province's Korky village last week. Cambodian authorities have ordered an investigation into violent clashes over a land dispute in which a protester was shot, after a video clip of the incident sparked outrage on social media.

<https://bit.ly/2RXNYem>; <https://bit.ly/2Rv6ypc>; <https://bit.ly/2BbzpcG>; <https://bit.ly/2Wuq48U>;
<https://bit.ly/2Tn3ZXZ>;

The Appeal Court on Thursday rejected the plea for bail by Rath Rott Mony, a suspected filmmaker who has been "temporarily detained" over accusations of "incitement to discriminate" for his alleged role in a documentary shown last October by RT, formerly Russia Today.

<https://bit.ly/2Tncv9h>; <https://bit.ly/2HICjLS>; <https://bit.ly/2RtDb6l>; <https://bit.ly/2SnaU64>;

An Interior Ministry official has warned of legal action against anyone who continues to display the seal of the court-dissolved Cambodia National Rescue Party.

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

8- Other and Political Opinions

Last week's [declaration](#) by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen calling for the armed forces, led by his son Hun Manet, to "destroy" the already outlawed opposition confirms what many had feared, even as the international community and the United Nations have been generously silent on Hun Sen's violent words, which have often been translated into lethal action.

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

About 70-80 per cent of Vietnamese living in Cambodia have gained the country's legal recognition that paves the way for them to obtain Cambodian citizenship, a Vietnamese official said. Senior government officials on Wednesday rejected claims in a report by Hanoi-based daily, Viet Nam News (VNS), that quotes a senior Vietnamese official as saying that 70-80 per cent of its nationals living in the Kingdom are recognized by the Cambodian government, allowing them citizenship.

<https://bit.ly/2G1mTAJ;> <https://bit.ly/2MO4fwQ;>

The Ministry of Interior's General Department of Immigration deported 69 Chinese nationals following their arrest in Svay Rieng province earlier this month for operating a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) online money extortion scam.

<https://bit.ly/2CZN7zq;> <https://bit.ly/2DMWmou>

On Wednesday, the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC), the central bank, announced that it would add the yuan and yen as official clearing currencies, allowing qualified banks to use both for international payments and settlements, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

<https://bit.ly/2G20Byz;>

Thanks,