



Genocide Watch  
The Alliance Against Genocide

## Country Report: Cambodia July 2024

The Cambodian Genocide caused the death of two million Cambodians. The targets of the genocide included officials of the former regime, intellectuals, former city dwellers, Cham Muslims, Vietnamese, Buddhist monks, and Christians. Despite the end of the Cambodian Genocide, Cambodia's attempt to portray itself as a democratic government does not align with its reality. In practice, Cambodia functions as a single-party state with manipulated and controlled elections, a lack of independent media, ruling party dominance over all state institutions, political influence over the judiciary, and ongoing harassment and targeting of critics within the political opposition and civil society

[Cambodia must end harassment of human rights defenders](#) . UN experts have urged Cambodia to end the harassment and prosecution of human rights defenders and civil society activists. Political and civil society activists, including Koeut Saray, have been arrested in Phnom Penh for civic work. Additionally, according to independent experts, the conviction of ten environmental activists and labor rights activists in the state demonstrates a continuing trend of intolerance toward human rights defenders. Numerous arrests are reportedly linked to exercising right to freedom of expression, experts have [expressed grave concern about due process and fair trial standards they said had not been adhered to during the trial.](#)

The conviction and punitive sentencing of ten Cambodian environmental activists, including [lèse majesté](#), raises concerns about probable violations of international human rights standards. The growing use of lèse majesté and other criminal code provisions to punish human rights violations is disturbing. The case should be reconsidered on appeal in accordance with international human rights legislation, especially for minors. Cambodia should organize public discussions to change the Cambodian Criminal Code in accordance with international human rights legislation, and work with the government on this process.

Genocide Watch considers Cambodia to be at **Stage 3: Discrimination**, **Stage 4: Organization**, **Stage 5: Polarization**, and **Stage 8: Persecution**. This stage is characterized by the arbitrary detention of opposition activists, the banning of the main opposition party, and the use of anti-drug campaigns that involve torture in detention centers.

### Genocide Watch recommends:

- Demand the unconditional release of all political prisoners, opposition leaders, journalists, religious and human rights activists.
- Urge for judicial reform to end the ongoing judicialised harassment of human rights defenders and environmental activists
- Cambodia should allow genuinely free elections, including participation by the CNRP.
- The U.S. and E.U. should invoke Global Magnitsky sanctions against Cambodian leaders who contribute to violations of human rights.