

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations



Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item: Item 10: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia
Date: 3 October 2025
Speaker: Catherine Morris

Oral Statement to the 60th Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), the International Commission of Jurists, and the International Bar Association, NGOs in special consultative status

Cambodia: Further deterioration of the rule of law

Mr. President,

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, the International Commission of Jurists, and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute concur with the Special Rapporteur's findings about persisting human rights violations and abuses in Cambodia.¹ We are deeply concerned about Cambodia's longstanding strangulation of civic space and dissent; misuse of judicial processes; and arbitrary detention of land rights and environmental defenders, labour leaders, opposition politicians, and journalists.

Cambodia's recent armed conflict with Thailand has led to a crackdown on freedom of expression. Journalists' independent reporting has led to arbitrary detention on false treason charges.

Cambodia continues to resist the establishment of an independent judiciary and legal profession, resulting in a systemic lack of fair trials – and crowded prisons. Inadequate legal aid further compounds lack of independent legal representation. Government-organized legal aid remains inadequate and lacks independence. Access to legal aid lawyers appointed by independent civil society organizations has deteriorated with the plummeting of international aid.

The recent overbroad amendments to the Constitution and Nationality Law create alarming potential for stripping of citizenship on politicized grounds without due process, should authorities deem citizens' actions to harm ill-defined national interests.

The need for continued independent monitoring by the Special Rapporteur is clear. We urge the Council to renew the mandate.

Thank you.

¹ Situation of human rights in Cambodia, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, A/HRC/60/86, 23 July 2025, <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/60/86>.