

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 25, 2018

The Honorable Nikki Haley
U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Ambassador Haley:

As you know, the Cambodian government has carried out a widespread attack on Cambodia's opposition, civil society, and media, demonstrating an unprecedented attack on Cambodia's fragile and burgeoning democracy.

Over the last year, the government has intensified the misuse of the justice system to prosecute political opposition and human rights activists, arresting the leader of the political opposition on dubious charges of treason, dissolving the main opposition party, and banning over 100 of its members from political activity. Since July 2015, authorities have arrested over 35 opposition and civil society leaders, many of whom have been prosecuted and convicted in summary trials that failed to meet international standards.

The government has also forced several independent media outlets to close and forced several radio stations to stop broadcasting independent international programming from the Voice of America and Radio Free Asia. Authorities have also continued to suppress protests and ban gatherings and processions. The crackdown has essentially ended the country's nascent democratic system and cemented the rule of Prime Minister Hun Sen's ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP). The CPP led the crackdown and thoroughly controls the country's security services and courts. It is now clear that barring any seismic reversal in the government's actions, the upcoming elections this year will not be free and fair.

We welcomed the White House statement of November 16 announcing the termination of support for the July elections and the Cambodian National Election Committee, noting that it concluded: "On current course, next year's election will not be legitimate, free, or fair." We also welcomed the US government's decision to bar visas and entry to Cambodian government officials implicated in the crackdown, and their immediate family members, although we remain concerned that the list of sanctioned officials is still under review.

More effort is needed, however, to isolate the Cambodian government, pressure them to reverse course, and—should they not reverse course—ensure that they gain no validity from an illegitimate "election" that is neither free nor fair. For these reasons, we call on you to strongly appeal to our partners and allies at the UN Human Rights Council to address these issues at the upcoming UN Human Rights Council session, including a dialogue with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN special rapporteur for Cambodia, and representatives

of civil society. At that Special Session, we would urge you to work with other governments to pass a strong resolution that puts the government on notice on the international stage.

We also urge you to consider using your voice at the UN Security Council to raise concerns about the crackdown, given the central role the council played in crafting Cambodia's political restoration in the early 1990s in the wake of civil war and Khmer Rouge era atrocities. The U.N. Security Council did not approve multiple resolutions in the 1990s and sent hundreds of UN staff and billions of dollars in UN mission support only to see our investment in Cambodia end with an entrenched and abusive autocratic ruler in power.

Thank you for your efforts to secure a rights-respecting and democratic Cambodia. We know you share these concerns, and look forward to your thoughts for how these issues will be addressed.

Sincerely,



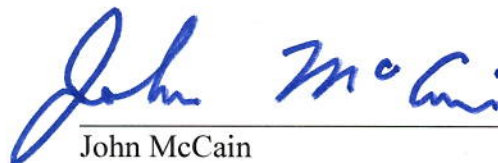
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



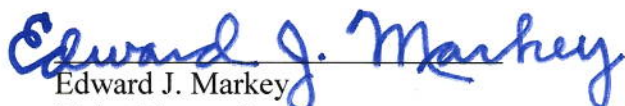
Lindsey Graham
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



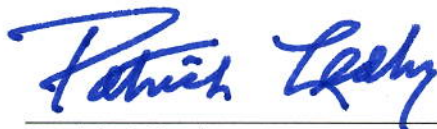
John McCain
United States Senator



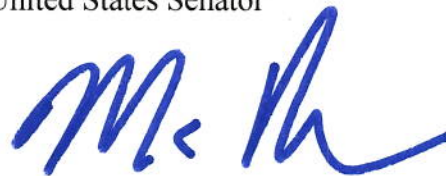
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