



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**  
**Nation Religion King**

**Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia  
to the United Nations and other International  
Organizations in Geneva**

No: 2025/08/667

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and, with reference to Special Rapporteurs' Joint Communication Ref: AL KHM 2/2025 dated 1 May 2025, has the honour to transmit herewith the attached letter of His Excellency Dara In, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva.

The Permanent Mission would greatly appreciate it if the OHCHR could convey the said letter to its highest destination.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 25 August 2025



Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
**Geneva**



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**  
**Nation Religion King**

**Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia  
to the United Nations and other International  
Organizations in Geneva**

No: 2025/08/666

Geneva, 25 August 2025

Dear Madam/Sir Special Rapporteurs,

I acknowledge the receipt of your Joint Communication Ref. AL KHM 2/2025 dated 1 May 2025 extended to H.E. Mr. PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, regarding your concern on the rights of individuals in relation to the case of Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam development triangle area (CLV-DTA).

Before addressing the substance of your concerns, I must respectfully draw your attention to the grave and ongoing military aggression committed by Thailand, which has resulted in serious violations not only of the Charter of the United Nations, but also of international humanitarian law and human rights law. At the time of writing, Cambodia remains deeply alarmed by the consequences of these actions. The operations carried out by Thai armed forces—marked by indiscriminate bombardment and the disproportionate use of force—have led to significant civilian casualties and widespread destruction of essential civilian infrastructure, including homes, schools, hospitals and places of worship. Of particular concern is the damage sustained by the Temple of Preah Vihear, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, underscoring a pattern of conduct that is irreconcilable with the principles of lawful conduct in conflict and warranting unequivocal condemnation.

**Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn,**

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia

**Dr. Matthew Gillett**

Vice-Chair on Communications the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

**Ms. Irene Khan,**

Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and Expression

**Ms. Gina Romero,**

Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

United Nations Human Rights  
Office of the High Commissioner  
**Geneva**

In the face of these repeated provocations, Cambodia has acted with restraint and resolve. Our armed forces have operated under strict orders to uphold the ceasefire—brokered through the commendable efforts of Malaysia and the United States, with the valued support of China—prevent further escalation, and ensure full compliance with international legal obligations. This posture reflects Cambodia’s enduring conviction that peace must be preserved through lawful means, dialogue and the rule of law.

At the same time, Cambodia is gravely concerned by the rise of xenophobic violence and discriminatory rhetoric targeting Cambodian nationals in Thailand, particularly migrant workers and students. This situation, fuelled by disinformation and inflammatory speech, place vulnerable communities at serious risk. Such actions are wholly incompatible with States’ obligations to guarantee non-discrimination, equal protection under the law and the safety and dignity of all persons within their jurisdiction.

Of urgent concern is the continued detention of eighteen Cambodian soldiers, captured during the ceasefire while in uniform—entitling them to prisoner-of-war status under the Third Geneva Convention. Their ongoing detention lacks legal basis and risks incurring State and individual responsibility under international humanitarian law. I therefore urge the Special Rapporteurs to give this matter the urgent attention it deserves and to support Cambodia’s call for the immediate and unconditional release of the captured soldiers, in line with Thailand’s obligations under international humanitarian law.

Turning to the matter of the CLV-DTA case, I wish to express appreciation for your engagement prior to any public disclosure via the OHCHR communications portal or presentation before the Human Rights Council. Cambodia values this spirit of dialogue, which allows for the clarification of facts, the correction of misperceptions and the avoidance of premature or unbalanced conclusions. In this context, I must respectfully draw your attention to the fact that the summary provided in the Joint Communication does not fully reflect the situation on the ground. What follows is a comprehensive clarification—grounded in fact and law—regarding the CLV-DTA and the measures undertaken by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) in response to a coordinated campaign aimed at destabilising national peace under the pretext of opposing the CLV framework.

### ***1. Background on Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area case and Government’s measures***

The RGC wishes to clarify that extremist opposition groups have, in the past, deliberately misrepresented the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area (CLV-DTA), established 25 years ago. Using both traditional and social media, these groups have spread baseless claims intended to mislead the public, including:

- alleging that the RGC ceded the northeastern provinces of Ratanakkiri, Mondulakiri, Kratie and Stung Treng to Vietnam through the CLV-DTA;

- claiming these provinces have become joint venture capital shared with Vietnam and Laos; and
- falsely asserting that the CLV-DTA allows Vietnamese citizens to freely enter and settle in Cambodia, thereby threatening national sovereignty.

Due to the spread of misinformation and incitement on social media, some individuals have expressed concern about the perceived risk of Cambodia losing territory through the CLV-DTA. While some of these concerns are genuine, extremist opposition groups have exploited Cambodia’s historical territorial losses to advance their political agenda. By manipulating public patriotism, they aim to incite anti-Vietnamese sentiment and promote deceptive narratives. Under the guise of a demonstration scheduled for 18 August 2024, calling for Cambodia’s withdrawal from the CLV-DTA, their true intention is to incite unrest and attempt to overthrow the legitimate government.

Having faced several failed attempts by opposition groups to stage a colour revolution—such as after the 2013 election and the 9 November 2019 event—and in light of evidence related to the planned 18 August demonstration, the RGC has taken both “informing and educating” and “legal” measures to safeguard national peace and public wellbeing.

- **Informing and educating measure:** This measure aims to raise public awareness about the significance of the CLV-DTA and to expose the deceptive tactics of extremist opposition groups attempting to incite a colour revolution. It also seeks to prevent the 18 August plan by clarifying that those involved in conspiracies will face legal consequences. Dissemination meetings were held with the heads of ministries, institutions and provincial authorities, who then relayed information to officials and local communities through government working groups, media and social platforms. However, this effort has been misinterpreted by some as a threat to those criticizing the CLV-DTA or planning to join the 18 August demonstration.
- **Legal measure:** To maintain peace and uphold the rule of law, legal action has been taken against those attempting to destabilize the government under the guise of free expression. Under Operation Prevention Plan August 18, the authorities:
  - prevented 188 suspects from entering Phnom Penh by providing educational guidance before allowing them to return home;
  - arrested 43 individuals based on court warrants for plotting and inciting criminal activity;
  - detained 66 individuals during patrols and reviews. Of these, 57 were released after receiving educational guidance, while 9 ringleaders were sent to court based on solid evidence, including possession of weapons and communications about plans to overthrow the government.

## *2. Legal basis for authorities’ measures in the lead up to the planned protests*

Cambodian law enforcement authorities have gathered evidence that the 18 August Plan is part of a colour revolution orchestrated by extremist opposition groups. These groups have exploited public concerns over territorial integrity to incite anger and mobilize protests under the guise of opposing the CLV-DTA. The true objective, however, is to spark unrest and overthrow the legitimately elected government.

Seized evidence includes communications in Telegram groups, instructions for making homemade weapons (some of which were found on suspects during inspections on 17–18 August 2024), directives to target senior officials' residences and voice messages discussing plans to assassinate national leaders.

Under Cambodian law, the activities linked to this plan are classified as subversion, one of the gravest crimes against national security. The masterminds behind it face the following criminal charges:

- attempting to overthrow the Royal Government and seize power through non-electoral means, in violation of the Constitution and the principles of multi-party democracy. This offense is classified as “attack” under Articles 451 and 452 of the Criminal Code, punishable by 15 to 30 years in prison, or life imprisonment if committed by a public official.
- Participation in the plan constitutes “plotting” under Article 453 of the Criminal Code, punishable by 5 to 10 years in prison, or 10 to 20 years if committed by a public official.
- The subversive acts also violate the Anti-Terrorism Law and other relevant laws, with penalties applied according to the nature and severity of the offense.

Additionally, the RGC's actions are justified under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) and Constitution of Cambodia:

- Article 29(2) of the UDHR and Articles 19(3), 20 and 21 of the ICCPR state that the exercise of individual rights must not infringe on the rights of others or threaten public order or national security, and any propaganda for war and/or any advocacy that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.
- Paragraph 8 of the AHRD states that the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others, and the exercise of these rights and freedoms shall be limited to secure due recognition of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others, national security, public order, public health, public safety, public morality and the general welfare of the people.
- Article 41 of the Cambodian Constitution states that the “Khmer citizens shall have the freedom to express their personal opinions, the freedom of press, the freedom of publication and the freedom of assembly. No one can take abusively advantage of these rights to impinge on dignity of others, to affect the good mores and custom of society, public order and national security.”

### ***3. Legal and factual basis for the arrest, pre-trial detention and charges brought against the accused:***

#### *3.1 Evidence collected*

The RGC has examined and investigated to find the evidence that the organized extremist group planned to incite serious disturbance to social security using the following measures.

- They had established groups on social media platforms in order to instigate, incite and mobilize citizens, armed forces and civil servants to join the protest.
- They had used fake news to subvert, causing confusion and creating social chaos.
- They had identified the locations and timing for gathering in key public locations for their operation, for instance, the garden in front of the Royal Palace, resident of the former prime minister of Cambodia Samdech Techo Hun Sen, Win-Win Memorial, Cambodia-Vietnam Friendship Monument, Phnom Penh International Airport and Democracy Square and other key public areas.
- They had provided instructions on how to take action such as using gasoline bottle, making homemade bombs, burning down houses and businesses, fighting with police during arrests, sending weapons through delivery companies, blocking airport entrance, hitting police barricade with tractors, driving car/motorbike to cause chaos on the streets, printing shirts or signage for followers and distributing leaflets on the streets.
- They had provided instructions on the tools for their operation, including guns, sticks, gasoline bottles, kerosene, gas, rubber bands, knives, shovels, improvised weapons, drones equipped with explosives substance, improvised bombs, firecrackers, bombs, burning tires of cars and motorcycles, or objects that could be used against the authorities. These materials were found and confiscated from the suspects while the authorities were implementing the traffic control in the capital and provinces.

#### *3.2 Ms. Pov Lita and Ms. Sem Sophal Case*

Ms. Pov Lita and Ms. Sem Sophal were found by the authorities of the Department of Operations and Procedures of the National Centre for Information Technology, following the implementation of Rogatory Letter No. 559 dated 24 July 2024. They were then arrested pursuant to the Arrest Warrants No. 1197 dated 31 July 2024 and No. 1285 dated 16 August 2024 of the Investigating Judge of the Phnom Penh Court of First Instance.

The two were arrested as accomplices for participating in the plan to incite serious disturbance to social security [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] During the livestream, they have instigated the public's hatred towards the Royal Government with the intention of causing chaos and serious damage to national security through distortion of information and malicious accusations against the Royal Government of Cambodia and with respect to the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area (CLV-DTA).

After their arrest, Ms. Pov Lita and Ms. Sem Sophal were immediately brought before the investigating judge and were informed of their right to defend themselves in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Code. After hearing their testimony, examining the facts, the law and the seriousness of the crime to social security, the two accused were ordered to be detained at the Correctional Centre No. 2.

### *3.2 Mr. Thy Thorn and Ms. Ream Srey Pich Rothana Case*

The investigating judge has issued an arrest warrant for the charged persons, Mr. Thy Thorn and Ms. Ream Sreypich Rothana, pursuant to Order No. 1301 and No. 1304 dated 18 August 2024. They were charged [REDACTED] in participating in the act of conspiracy to commit treason in an attempt to overthrow the legitimate government of Cambodia.

On their first appearance before the investigating judge, the judge informed Mr. Thy Thorn and Ms. Ream Sreypich Rothana on the decision to place them under supervision for the charge of conspiracy under Article 453 of the Criminal Code, committed in Cambodia in 2024 and thereafter. The judge also informed them of their right to defend themselves in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Code of the Kingdom of Cambodia. During questioning, the two have exercised their rights to delay the questioning and requested a defence attorney before they agree to response to the charges.

After reviewing the relevant evidence in the case, the investigating judge issued an order to detain the two so as to ensure the completeness of the investigation. Pursuant to Order No. 8224 and No. 8225 dated 19 August 2025, Mr. Thy Thorn was detained at Correctional Centre 1 and Ms. Ream Sreypich Rothana at Correctional Centre 2.

## ***4. Notification to defendants of their charges***

The procedure regarding the decision whether to allow releases after a request for bail and the decision on the extension of pre-trial detention is the discretion of the investigating judge or court. This is carried out based on specific circumstances of the charged or the accused person, by weighing on the necessity, reasons for detention and the basis of a person's rights to liberty as stipulated in Article 203, 204, 205, 217 and 307 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

The investigating judge's decision to extend the detention of Mr. Thy Thorn and Ms. Ream Sreypich Rothana was made in accordance with Article 211 of the

Criminal Procedure Code after having heard the opinion of the charged persons and the means of defense of the defense lawyer. The investigating judge has reasoned that there were still people involved who have not been identified, that the investigation is complex and has not been conclusive, and that the extension is necessary to ensure the completion of the investigation, all of which are stipulated in Article 205 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Additionally, Article 208 of the Criminal Procedure Code stipulated that for felony offenses, the investigating judge may decide to extend pre-trial detention for only two times, each time for a period of six months.

##### ***5. Government's measures to ensure freedom of expression and peaceful assembly***

Cambodia, as a State party to the UDHR and ICCPR, fully upholds citizens' rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, as guaranteed by these instruments and enshrined in the Cambodian Constitution.

Millions of Cambodians actively use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Telegram and WhatsApp to freely express their views without restriction. Additionally, tens of thousands of journalists and numerous media outlets—both traditional and digital, national and international—operate without prior censorship, regularly publishing and broadcasting content critical of the Royal Government.

Ongoing efforts are being made to review and, where necessary, amend laws that impact fundamental freedoms, such as the Press Law and the Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations, to ensure great alignment with internal human rights standards. Drafting or revision processes often include consultations with relevant stakeholders, including civil society and international partners. The government encourages constructive dialogue between authorities (at both national and subnational levels) and civil society organizations, journalists and community leaders to address concerns and promote mutual understanding.

Public forums and human rights training programs are periodically conducted to raise awareness of rights and responsibilities related to freedom of expression and assembly.

Moreover, Cambodia actively cooperates with UN human rights mechanisms, including engaging with treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review and implementing accepted recommendations related to civil and political rights. The government also collaborates with development partners and international organizations to strengthen democratic space and civil participation.

##### ***6. Rule of law and the protection of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly***

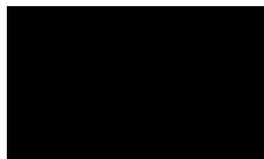
In a society governed by the rule of law, the exercise of personal freedoms must be conducted within the parameters established by law. The commission of unlawful acts entails legal consequences—this is not only consistent with, but

indispensable to, the functioning of a just and democratic society. The application of the law must be impartial and non-discriminatory; all individuals are equally subject to legal accountability. No person may invoke the pretext of human rights, nor the protection of any organisation, civil society group or political party, to immunise themselves from responsibility for acts that violate the law. The sole exception, as recognised by the Constitution—the supreme law of the land—concerns the parliamentary immunity accorded to members of the National Assembly and the Senate.

Equally, in a system founded on the rule of law, every person—whether a private citizen or State actor, natural or legal person—whose rights have been infringed has the legal right to seek judicial remedy. The courts serve as the appropriate venue for the resolution of disputes and for the protection of rights. Resort to the judiciary is not only a recognised legal pathway but a defining feature of constitutional governance. At the same time, the judiciary operates as an independent branch of government, and its decisions are rendered solely on the basis of the facts, applicable legal provisions, and the evidence presented—free from interference or external pressure.

In conclusion, I trust that the foregoing clarifications will be taken into due and careful consideration in your future deliberations and public communications. I take this opportunity to reaffirm the Royal Government of Cambodia’s enduring commitment to principled, constructive and transparent engagement with the United Nations Special Procedures and all relevant international human rights mechanisms operating under the auspices of the Human Rights Council.

Please accept, Madam/Sir Special Rapporteurs, the assurances of my high consideration.



**Dara In**  
**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary**  
**Permanent Representative**