



**Statement of Ireland**  
**42nd session of the Human Rights Council**

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Item 10: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of  
human rights in Cambodia

**25 September 2019**

Mr. (Vice) President,

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union.

Ireland thanks the Special Rapporteur for her work in reporting on the situation of human rights in Cambodia.

Ireland recognises the significant work undertaken by the Government in establishing the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals Framework earlier this year and the successful presentation of Cambodia's Voluntary National Review to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July. However Ireland is concerned at the findings of the Rapporteur on the continued repression of political rights and restriction of civil society space and of freedoms of expression, association and the press.

Ireland welcomes the extensive recommendations contained in the Special Rapporteur's report relating to the full achievement of the SDGs and urges Cambodia to engage with these recommendations as it moves ahead with the national strategic development plan.

We urge the Government to create conditions conducive to free political debate with a view to rebuilding a democracy in which supporters and members of the former opposition party can fully participate. We also urge the Government to ensure that the media and civil society, including human rights defenders, can operate freely without interference and in particular ensure that their work is not hindered by restrictions on freedom of peaceful assembly, association and expression, both online and offline.

Ireland once again calls for the full and unconditional release of Kem Sokha from house arrest, where he has been detained since September 2017. This would be a crucial step in creating much needed space for political dialogue in Cambodia and as the Special Rapporteur reports, will strengthen rather than weaken governance.

*Madame Special Rapporteur, you have noted the need for the creation of political space for dialogue between the Cambodian Government and opposition political actors. What, if any, role can the international community play in facilitating this?*