

# Press release: Minister for Asia & the Pacific statement on Cambodia's election

The Cambodian national election was undermined by the authorities well before campaigning started and resulted in an election that was neither fair nor credible.

The potential for a legitimate, free and fair election was stymied when the main opposition party – the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), was dissolved in November 2017. This was particularly disappointing following the more open Commune elections in June 2017.

The Cambodian authorities have demonstrated clear disregard for the key tenets of a functioning multi-party democracy. As well as the dissolution of the CNRP, examples include the imprisonment of CNRP President Kem Sokha, the banning of 118 CNRP members from politics for five years, and a crackdown on independent media.

There was no credible opposition party with the opportunity to challenge the Government. In a democracy, no government has the right to choose its opposition.

The UK will continue to urge the Cambodian Government to demonstrate its commitment to its citizens by lifting restrictions on political debate and media freedom and by creating the conditions for proper functioning democracy.