

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Tel: 212-290-4700
Fax: 212-736-1300
Fax: 917-591-3452

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October 16, 2013

Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault

Re: Cambodian election

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to you regarding your letter of October 4 congratulating Hun Sen on his appointment as Cambodia's prime minister following the National Assembly elections on July 28 this year.

As your government is aware, independent Cambodian election monitoring groups, international nongovernmental organizations, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Cambodia have concluded that the election process was severely marred by significant structural flaws and irregularities related to voter registration, voter fraud, partisan election bodies, media bias and lack of access for the opposition, unfair use of state resources by the incumbent Cambodian People's Party (CPP), and partisanship by the state security forces.

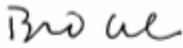
The result was a fundamentally flawed election that has created significant doubt about whether the official results reflect the votes cast. This has been heightened by the refusal of the CPP-controlled National Election Committee and Constitutional Council to conduct genuine investigations into even well-documented problems, including by effectively refusing to consider complaints brought by the opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP).

Instead of congratulating a leader who has already been in power for 28 years through a series of flawed elections and a coup, and a long history of grave human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, jailing of critics, and broad restrictions on fundamental liberties, we would expect a democracy like France to express its values by endorsing only a genuinely free and fair election process in Cambodia. France has a particularly important role in Cambodia given the key role it played in concluding the 1991 Paris Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict, which called for free and fair elections and committed the parties, including the CPP, scrupulous respect for human rights.

We urge you to put the weight of France and your office behind this goal by publicly calling for an independent, internationally assisted

investigation of the election process. Only after such an investigation will the winner of the July elections be known and whether the person who becomes prime minister should be congratulated. Otherwise, your letter may only embolden Hun Sen and undermine the hopes of millions of Cambodians who rely on the international community to support their demands for free and fair elections, based on respect for human rights and democratic principles.

Yours Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Brad Adams in black ink.

Brad Adams
Executive Director
Asia Division

Handwritten signature of Jean-Marie Fardeau in blue ink.

Jean-Marie Fardeau
France Director