

RELEASE IN PART B5

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Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2011 1:49 PM
To: H
Subject: Cambodian PM Call sheet

The Secretary's Call Sheet for Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen



B5

Background: The Cambodian government has proposed an NGO law that would impose mandatory, burdensome registration requirements and could allow arbitrary and selective criminalization or closure of NGOs. This would have a drastic impact on international NGOs and their many local development partners, and threatens to muzzle local advocacy and human rights organizations. The Department and Embassy Phnom Penh have repeatedly urged Cambodia to reassess the necessity of such a law and to enter into serious consultations with local NGOs and other stakeholders. The current draft, released to civil society groups in Phnom Penh in late July, retains most of the objectionable provisions from earlier drafts, despite consultations with NGOs and extensive diplomatic pressure. The Ministry of Interior, after consulting with Prime Minister Hun Sen, forwarded the draft to the Council of Ministers (CoM) for its review. Once approved, the law would move to debate in the legislature, where we expect it to be quickly approved with no changes. While there is no fixed timetable for CoM consideration of the law, the process could move quickly. We are coordinating our strategy and messaging with the EU, UN, UK, Canadian, and German missions in Phnom Penh.

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