

Phnom Penh, June 1, 2023

## **Joint Statement**

### **Guarantee the Rights to Vote and the Rights to Stand for the Election of Members of the National Assembly, 7<sup>th</sup> Legislature 2023**

We, the undersigned civil society organizations, associations, and trade unions listed below, express profound regret for the loss of rights of the Khmer National Unity Party and the Candlelight Party to contest in the upcoming Election of Members of the National Assembly, 7<sup>th</sup> Legislature, scheduled to be held on July 23, 2023, due to their disqualification on the grounds of inadequate paperwork for registration.

Following the National Election Committee's announcement of their decision to reject both the parties' respective Registration of Political Party at the Ministry of Interior (MOI) documents because of a never-invoked bureaucratic technicality, the Khmer National Unity Party and the Candlelight party have lost their right to stand for election.

According to the National Election Committee (NEC), both parties failed to attach the original political party registration, which is certified by the Capital, Province, Municipality, District, and Khan Administration's One Window Service Office, to their applications. In all previous elections, the NEC had only required a copy of the Registration of Political Party certificate at the Ministry of Interior (MOI). For instance, the NEC allowed the Candlelight Party to use a copy of the certificate mentioned above for the last Commune/Sangkat Council elections in 2022 and the recently commissioned District/Municipal Council elections held in early April 2023. This past practice of accepting copies of the political party registration contributed to, facilitating and advancing the right to vote and standing for election.

The absence of the two parties above is a loss of the right to contest in the election, and some voters will lose the option of electing their preferred political party.

It is telling that in the 2022 Commune/Sangkat Council Elections, one of the two parties received 1,610,556 votes out of the total of 7,394,427 votes cast, and obtained more than two thousand commune council seats.

We, the undersigned group of civil society organizations, associations, and trade unions, view that inclusive participation of all political parties wishing to run for the election ensures the promotion of the right to vote and the right to stand for election, which is fundamental to inclusive, participatory development in accordance with the policy of national unification and national unity.

This statement is endorsed by:

1. Cambodian Human Rights Action Coalition (CHRAC)
2. Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP)
3. Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
4. Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)

5. Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability (CISA)
6. Cambodian Institute for Democracy (CID)
7. Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL)
8. Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)
9. Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)
10. People Center for Development and Peace (PDP-CENTER)
11. Cambodian Youth Network Association (CYN)
12. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
13. Cambodian Grassroots Cross-sector Network (CGCN)
14. Cambodia Labour Confederation (CLC)
15. Federation of Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC)
16. Cambodian Informal Economy Workers Association (CIWA)
17. Free Independent Trade Union Federation (FUFU)
18. Independent Trade Union Federation (INTUFEE)
19. Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU)
20. Labour Rights Supported Union Khmer Employees of Naga (L.R.S.U)
21. Cambodian Tourism Workers Union Federation (CTWUF)
22. Cambodian Food and Service Workers Federation (CFSWF)