

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/cambodia-rwb-and-ccim-offer-recommendations-03-07-2013,44878.html>

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Asia - Cambodia

Recommendations

## RWB and CCIM offer recommendations ahead of parliamentary elections

3 July 2013

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Reporters Without Borders and the Cambodian Centre for Independent Media (CCIM) have drafted a list of recommendations for the authorities for improving respect for freedom of information in Cambodia, where the campaign for parliamentary elections on 28 July has just begun.

"Freedom of information in Cambodia has declined steadily during the past two years," Reporters Without Borders and CCIM said. "Last week's attempt by the information ministry to ban local retransmission of foreign radio stations' Khmer-language programmes was very disturbing, especially as the ruling party already controls all TV stations and most radio stations and newspapers.

"We caution the authorities against any renewed attempt to suppress coverage of the election campaign and we urge them to guarantee an environment that allows all media and journalists to work freely. We also call on the government to make an effort to be transparent and facilitate reporting during the elections."

The two organizations added: "We also urge information minister Kannarith Khieu to rescind [his ban](#) on publishing opinion polls in the five days before the elections, which has no legal basis, and to explain an order forbidding radios to 'broadcast information about the activities of foreigners based in Cambodia in support of or opposition to any political party or individual'."

On 24 June, Reporters Without Borders submitted a contribution on Cambodia to the United Nations Human Rights Council, which will examine the situation in Cambodia during the Universal Periodic Review's 18th session, next January and February.

The Reporters Without Borders contribution voices concern about the lack of media independence and restrictions on access to information, which limit transparency during elections, as it did, for example, in the 2012 commune elections (see the Reporters Without Borders contribution below).

On the pretext of safeguarding neutrality, the information ministry issued a directive on 25 June banning local radio stations from retransmitting the Khmer-language programmes of foreign radio stations during the campaign.

The directive was rescinded five days later, following protests by the foreign broadcasters affected, such as the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), the agency that oversees *Radio Free Asia*, and the US State Department, which described the move as a "serious violation of media freedom."

With an eye on the 28 July elections, Reporters Without Borders urges politicians, government officials and other authorities to:

- Implement the recommendations that Cambodia accepted at the end of the [2009](#)

[Human Rights Council session.](#)

- Draft laws on access to information and freedom of information in consultation with civil society, in order to improve media transparency and professionalism.
- End impunity for physical attacks against journalists and other media personnel and set up a commission to identify those responsible for journalist Heng Serei Oudom's murder in 2012 and other cases of violence.
- Lift the restrictions on radio and TV broadcasting and reform the frequency allocation process so that independent and community broadcasters can operate.
- Publish the draft cyber-crime law and allow civil society to suggest changes to the draft.
- Repeal the law criminalizing denial of the Khmer genocide.

Cambodia is ranked 143rd out of 179 countries in the [2013 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

**Read the Reporters Without Borders contribution on Cambodia to the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review:**



**RWB's  
contribution on  
Cambodia to the  
United Nations  
Human Rights  
Council**



**Guideline from  
Ministry of  
Information  
(Khmer)**



**Guideline from  
Ministry of  
Information  
(translation in  
English)**

*Photo : TANG CHHIN SOTHY / AFP*

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