

Question for written answer E-002329/2023

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 138

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Subject: EU response to electoral process violations in Cambodia

On 23 July 2023 Cambodia held national elections in a very repressive environment: there is no significant opposition party; the Candlelight Party was arbitrarily banned from participating in the election; the law was amended to criminalise citizens who called for ballot spoiling or boycotting the vote; opposition leaders have been arbitrarily arrested and subjected to violence; political prisoners have been forced to defect to the governing Cambodian People's Party (CPP); the National Election Committee is fully CPP controlled and the national internet gateway blocks access to all domestic and international free media.

None of the points in the 10-point human rights agenda recommended in 2022 by the UN Special Rapporteur on Cambodia were implemented. Calls made by the EU when the 'Everything But Arms' trade agreement was partially suspended in 2020 and by Parliament in its resolutions of 2022-2023 have been fully ignored.

1. Will the EU decline to recognise a government if the election process is found to be 'not legitimate' and 'lack(ing) credibility', as it was in 2018?
2. Will the EU's 'Everything But Arms' trade scheme with Cambodia be further suspended given that the situation in the country has deteriorated further?
3. When will the European External Action Service start procedures that will introduce targeted measures towards individuals responsible for gross human rights violations, as continuously called for by Parliament?

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