

PRESS RELEASE

Disenfranchisement at Polls as Citizens Unable to Vote and Illegal Voting Allowed

Phnom Penh, 29 July 2013 - Transparency International Cambodia (TIC) conducted a sample-based observation of the July 28th election and vote count. A total of 906 TIC observers were deployed to a representative sample of 407 polling stations across 24 provinces and municipalities. Citizens were frustrated to find that their names were not on the voters list and this led to anger and chaos at some polling stations. While many were turned away, others without identification, and an unusually large number of people using ICEs (temporary identification documents distributed by Commune Councils), were allowed to vote.

- In 60% of polling stations, citizens with proper identification were unable to find their names on this list. This is consistent with independent audit findings showing almost 11% of eligible citizens who think they are registered but are not on the list. Critical incidents also show that voters also showed up to discover they had been voted for already.
- In 26% of the polling stations, people were allowed to vote without valid identification. This is against election law and particularly concerning given the excess names on the voters list and the over half a million duplicate names, as uncovered by independent sources.
- Voting with ICEs was prevalent and in 93% of polling stations ICEs were used. In an alarming 12% of stations, 51 or more voters used an ICE to vote. Given the excess names on the voters list, duplicates, over-registration rates in high-stakes areas, and lack of transparency in the ICE distribution process, this number of ICEs is problematic. The National Election Committee (NEC) reports almost half a million ICEs issued since voter registration, an implausible figure given that ICEs should only be distributed to those who lost their identification since registering to vote.

In 11% of polling stations, the results were not posted right after the counting, against regulation and making it difficult to confirm accuracy of announced results.

Voter turnout was 69% of registered voters, compared to 75.21% in 2008.

The national vote share results:

No	Political Party	Percentage	Party Margin of Error	SBO Confidence Range
1	Cambodian Nationality Party	0.6%	±0.1%	0.5% - 0.7%
2	FUNCIPEC Party	3.5%	±0.4%	3.2% - 3.9%
3	Republic Democracy Party	0.6%	±0.1%	0.5% - 0.6%
4	Cambodian People's Party	48.5%	±1.6%	46.8% - 50.1%

5	Khmer Economic Development Party	0.4%	±0.1%	0.3% - 0.5%
6	Khmer Anti-Poverty Party	0.8%	±0.2%	0.6% - 0.9%
7	Cambodia National Rescue Party	44.4%	±1.8%	42.6% - 46.2%
8	League for Democracy Party	1.3%	±0.4%	0.9% - 1.7%

In 99% of polling stations, voters could mark their ballots in secret. In 95% of polling stations, reasonable decisions were made about valid and invalid ballots. In only 4.9% of polling stations were unauthorized people allowed inside.

TIC is very concerned about the disenfranchisement of citizens and suspect voting, which are consistent with the warnings outlined by independent organizations for the past several months. TIC regrets the complete inaction of the National Election Committee (NEC) to address these concerns despite advance notice and evidence that they would occur. Further, the NEC actively obstructed citizens from getting information about their voter status to alleviate confusion by prohibiting parties from carrying copies of the list and closing the database to the public early.

Given the close vote share and failure to post results at the polling station, TIC recommends transparency in the tabulation and seat allocation calculation and the public release of all polling station results. Further, TIC recommends the appointment of an independent body to investigate polling irregularities.

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A sample-based observation (SBO) is not a survey or an exit poll, but an election monitoring methodology that involves the observation of a representative sample of polling stations and provides statistically meaningful information on the conduct of voting and counting as well as the ability to verify the accuracy of the official results for the parliamentary elections. The sample was drawn using stratified, clustered random sampling, with a 1.8% margin of error and a level of confidence of 95%.

Election day conduct and the vote counting represent one aspect of the overall election process and must be interpreted in a broader context. A significant lack of transparency in the election administration and decision-making raise doubts about the legitimacy and credibility of the elections process. Significant concerns have been raised by independent organizations about the election environment and process leading up to the elections, including unequal access to media, misuse of state resources by the governing party, problems with voters list, removable ink, and perceived lack of credibility in the neutrality of the election management body.

Transparency International Cambodia (TIC) is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization with a mission to promote integrity, transparency, and accountability, and reduce corruption. TIC observed the elections to increase transparency and accountability during the election process and to deter and report irregularities and political corruption on the Election Day. The election observations were conducted according to the strict the principles of impartiality and accuracy. TIC conducted this election monitoring in collaboration with the Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability (CISA) a leading NGO coalition of more than 30 organizations committed to promote accountability, transparency, integrity, equality and

justice. TIC is a member of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors and an endorser of the UN-supported Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Monitoring.

TIC received technical and financial assistance from **National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)**, an international non-profit and non-partisan organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. NDI has successfully pioneered the SBO technique around the world. NDI is supported by generous assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

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