

# Human Rights Now

Oral statement on agenda Item 10

Situation in Cambodia

UN Human Rights Council 27<sup>th</sup> Session,

Geneva, 8-26 2014 Speaker: Mr. Bassim Boutemine



Human Rights Now, a Tokyo-based international NGO, commends the Special Rapporteur, Professor Surya Subedi, for his tireless activities and great accomplishment that have contributed to improve human rights situation in Cambodia. At the same time, we are very much concerned about the wide-spread violations of the freedom of peaceful assembly and the right to a fair trial in the country.

For instance, between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> of July, eight members of National Council for Peace and Order (CNRP) were arrested after violence broke out between the protesters and security forces at Freedom Park during a peaceful demonstration. Although they were released on July 22, they still face serious charges that could be used any time to harass or oppress them. Moreover, detentions against young CNRP members, as well as other human rights defenders have been reported in August and in September respectively.

Arbitrary apprehension and prosecution of human rights defenders and participants in peaceful assemblies not only constitute a violation of their freedom of assembly but also have chilling effects on the ordinary citizens in exercising their basic rights. Even if the administration and the police go out of control, the judicial power must remain independent and able to check executive power in terms of the rule of law.

Human Rights Now calls upon the Council to closely monitor the situation and urge the Cambodian authorities:

- 1) To ensure the right to peaceful assembly for all Cambodians to be put into immediate effect by lifting the existing restrictions on assembly ; and
- 2) To secure the independence and impartiality of the judiciary and rule of law and to prevent the ruling party from abusing the legal system for their own political purposes.

Thank you