

Question for written answer E-001984/2024
to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Rule 144
Catarina Vieira (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Cambodian Ministry of Interior's investigation into the Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)

On 4 June 2024, the Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL) released its report 'Barriers to Representation: Freedom of Association in Cambodia'¹. The report concluded that there were widespread obstacles to freedom of association in Cambodian workplaces, including verbal intimidation, threats, harassment and blacklisting, which severely affected their ability to function. Shortly after the report was published, the Ministry of Interior, among other organisations, began to take action against CENTRAL in what Human Rights Watch has described as a 'smear campaign'². This action takes place in the context of an ongoing government crackdown on independent media, civil society organisations and political opposition, which was the subject of a European Parliament resolution in March 2023³.

1. How does the Vice-President / High Representative respond to the measures taken against CENTRAL by the Cambodian Government and how are the organisation's basic freedoms and rights being protected?
2. Will the EU's ambassador to Cambodia put pressure on the Cambodian Government to act in response to the drastically shrinking space for civil society in the country?
3. Is the Vice-President / High Representative following up on the partial withdrawal of the Everything But Arms scheme from Cambodia by making sure that the scheme's provisions on human and workers' rights are respected?

Submitted: 8.10.2024

¹ <https://central-cambodia.org/archives/6989>.

² <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/02/cambodia-smear-campaign-against-labor-group>.

³ European Parliament resolution of 16 March 2023 on Cambodia: the case of opposition leader Kem Sokha, OJ C, C/2023/408, 23.11.2023, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/408/oj>.