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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Borrell i Fontelles
on behalf of the European Commission
(26.11.2024)

Human rights continue to be at the centre of EU engagement with Cambodia. The decision to partially withdraw¹ the Everything But Arms (EBA) trade preferences is a clear example of the EU commitment to the human rights agenda. The EU is regularly monitoring developments in relation to the concerns raised in the withdrawal regulation. On 21 November 2023, the Commission published the Report on EU Enhanced Engagement with Cambodia², which contains an assessment of the developments in Cambodia in the areas of concern.

The EU is closely following the situation of the Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL) and other cases of intimidation of civil society organisations. The Delegation staff has met with CENTRAL several times in the last few months. The EU Head of Delegation in Cambodia has been consistently raising these issues with his counterparts in the Cambodian administration, including this specific case. The question of shrinking civil space also featured on the agenda of discussions which took place in the context of the 12th EU-Cambodia Joint Committee held in Brussels on 25 April 2024. A substantial discussion covered inter-alia civil and political, labour and women's rights.

Moreover, in line with the Council conclusions on the priorities of the EU in United Nations Human Rights fora in 2024, and its policy to denounce human rights violations and abuses whenever they occurred, the EU has continued to engage with the United Nations, including during 57th Human Rights Council session in Geneva. On that occasion, the EU publicly reiterated its concern about harassment of non-governmental organisations and labour rights groups³.

¹ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/550 of 12 February 2020, OJ L127 of 24.4.2020, p 1.

² [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD\(2023\)360&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD(2023)360&lang=en)

³ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-geneva/hrc57-interactive-dialogue-special-rapporteur-cambodia_en?s=62