To His Excellency Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic:

Subject: Joint Appeal to Support Civic Space, Democratic Participation, and Social Dialogue Ahead of the 20th Francophonie Summit

Dear Mr. President,

We, the undersigned Cambodian civil society organizations, trade unions, human rights defenders, youth groups, women's rights organizations, community representatives, and citizens are seriously concerned about democratic backsliding, human rights violations, and attacks on civil society in Cambodia. As the country prepares to host the Francophonie Summit this month in Phnom Penh we urge member states to demonstrate their commitment to fundamental freedoms, meaningful civic participation, social dialogue, and democratic engagement that underpin the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).

As Cambodia continues its economic transformation and deepens its international engagement, including through the Francophonie community, the country must ensure that development is inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the aspirations of its people. Instead, activists, politicians, journalists, workers and engaged citizens face arbitrary detention and a withdrawal of their fundamental rights, including political rights ahead of the upcoming local and national elections to be held in 2027 and 2028, respectively.

Francophonie member states and Embassies in Cambodia must publicly support democratic institutions, civic participation, gender equality, social dialogue, and the rule of law.

We respectfully call on France to:

1. Raise human rights violations directly with your Cambodian government counterparts, including calling for the immediate release and dropping of charges against all jailed human rights defenders, journalists, union leaders, and activists, starting with the seven convicted Mother Nature and Khmer Student Intelligent League Association (KSILA) youth activists;

2. Raise the rapidly deteriorating situation for democracy and political freedoms, to ensure that Cambodians are allowed to meaningfully participate in local and national elections without fear of persecution and ensure that all political parties are freely contest for upcoming 2027 and 2028 election.
3. Promote meaningful engagement between Francophonie delegations and Cambodian civil society organizations, including trade unions, youth groups, women's rights organizations, and human rights organizations;
4. Support opportunities for youth participation in public affairs and policy discussions associated with the Francophonie Summit;
5. Ensure all Francophonie business and investment operations in and linked to Cambodia are fully compliant with human rights and environmental due diligence principles throughout the global supply chain with clear indicators of human rights and environmental expectations.
6. Recognize the contribution of independent trade unions and worker organizations in strengthening social dialogue, decent work, and responsible economic development. This includes supporting the ongoing strike by the Labour Rights Supported Union of Khmer Employees of NagaWorld (LRSU), which is the longest-running strike in Cambodia's history.

The Francophonie community and member states must push the Cambodian government on its commitment to democratic values, human rights and equitable development for all its citizens.

Yours sincerely,

Phnom Penh, Cambodia
11 November 2026