

## DEMOCRACY FOR CAMBODIA

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The Pol Pot regime was well known in the world that it was a genocidal regime and at present, the Cambodian Government and the United Nations establishes an Extraordinary Chamber to try its leaders. They used the word “Democratic” as the name of the country but it was totally opposite. It was a genocidal and military dictatorship regime only. Now, we, Cambodian people are facing this word “Democracy” again in our new Constitution. The Constitution states clearly that Cambodian shall adopt the Principles of Liberal Democracy and must adopt them forever . Is it true? What are the differences between democracy of Pol Pot and the current democracy in Cambodia? Is the current liberal democracy in Cambodia the same as liberal democracy in other democratic countries? Do we want only name but in fact it is other type of democracy? Of course not, we need real liberal democracy.

If we analyze deeply the Cambodian Constitution, we can find many elements of the Democracy such as Principles of Separation of Powers , Independence of Judiciary , and Parliament Members shall be elected through Free and Fair Election . Even though there is no word of neutral armed forces, but the Constitution states clearly that the King is the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Chairman of the Supreme Council of National Defense.

But in reality, it is totally different. All those elements have not yet been realized. There has not been real separation of powers. The Executive dominates all other branches. Cambodian Parliament Members can lose their seats if they lose their membership from political party . That’s why the Executive can dominate the Legislative through political party. The Judiciary is not independent and still has reputation for being corrupt. Armed force and police are still politicized from the top to the bottom. The Supreme Council of National Defense has not yet been established. Many laws relating to exercising freedom and rights of the people are still old which were passed since communist regime. Therefore, there are a lot of things need to do to have real the democracy in Cambodia.

In order to realize the democracy enshrined in the Constitution, Cambodia needs to reform administration, judiciary, military, police and legal system. Even though, the Cambodian Royal Government agreed on these points and also put them into their rectangular strategies and promised to pass many laws, we need real political will, too. The politicians shall put all those principles more important than the goal of their political parties and individual goals. That’s why CDP put one of its missions in realizing the Liberal Democracy in Cambodia and that’s why CDP are doing legal awareness and legal advocacy as part of their core activity, providing legal services to the poor and vulnerable people.

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