

## PRESS RELEASE

# Transparency International Cambodia Publishes Final Observation Report on the 2013 National Election

*Report confirms widespread voting irregularities*

**Phnom Penh, 19 September 2013** – Today, Transparency International Cambodia (TIC) is pleased to announce the launch of its election monitoring report entitled “*Final Election Observation Report on Cambodia’s 2013 National Election.*” TIC, in cooperation with the Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability (CISA) network, was accredited by the National Election Committee (NEC) to observe the Cambodian national elections on 28 July 2013. During the elections, TIC deployed 906 nonpartisan observers to the representative sample of 409 polling stations across 24 provinces and municipalities in Cambodia to conduct a Sample-Based Observation (SBO).

Compared to previous election campaigns, fewer serious incidents and outbreaks of violence were reported, which is a sign that security issues have improved. This year’s election period saw an increase in enthusiasm and interest from the general public, particularly from members of the youth who took part in the major political party rallies. This was also one of the most competitive election campaign periods experienced to date, with thousands turning out to support both the CPP and opposition CNRP during their rallies throughout the country.

Nonetheless, TIC is deeply concerned with the widespread irregularities observed during the national elections, particularly the large-scale disenfranchisement of voters and the prevalence of Identification Certificate for Electoral Purposes (“ICE”, a temporary identification document used to replace lost or stolen identification papers).

In 60% of polling stations, TIC’s SBO found that some voters with proper identification could not find their names on the list. Furthermore, in 26% of the polling stations, some people were allowed to vote without valid identification and in an alarming 11% of the polling stations, 51 or more voters used an ICE to vote.

Based on the level of irregularities witnessed on Election Day, among other factors highlighted in its report, TIC cannot express with confidence that the outcome of the election accurately reflects the will of the Cambodian people.

The widespread irregularities witnessed on Election Day and during the pre-election period – and the crisis of confidence that followed—show the clear need for meaningful and far-reaching electoral reforms to build the integrity of and return much-needed confidence to the electoral process. In the spirit of completing Cambodia’s long transition to a transparent, accountable and genuine democracy, TIC’s election monitoring report made the following recommendations:

- The National Election Committee should be dismantled and a new, independent and constitutionally-mandated election commission should be created with the authority, comprehensive jurisdiction, and budget to operate effectively and commissioners selected in a transparent manner with the involvement of all key stakeholders
- The current voter registration process needs to be eliminated, and the creation of either automatic registration through a valid civil registry or, at a minimum, the removal of

responsibility from the political and partisan Commune Councils to a permanent election bureaucracy

- Revision of the Law on the Election of Members of the National Assembly (LEMNA) should include necessary measures to prevent the use of state resources, including vehicles, materials and the time of military, police and government officials, by political parties for campaigning
- Political party financing should be provided in accordance to Article 27 of the Law on Political Parties. The law should be revised to ensure transparency, requiring all political parties to report their political party financing and expenditures in the lead up to and during the election period
- The government of Cambodia needs to commit to a plan and timeline by which to complete the civil registry and distribute national identification cards to all citizens. A comprehensive civil database needs to be open for public review and audit.
- ICEs need to be eliminated. The Ministry of Interior can create a mechanism to replace stolen or lost national IDs.
- The National Assembly, with input from political parties and civil society, should ensure all major political parties have fair and equal access to the mass media by forming an independent body to oversee state-owned television and radio. This includes the Ministry of Information allowing foreign media to be broadcasted without any restrictions during political or election periods.

**Transparency International Cambodia (TIC)** is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization with a mission to promote integrity, transparency, and accountability in order to reduce corruption. TIC observed the elections to increase transparency and accountability during the election process and to deter and report irregularities and political corruption on the Election Day. The election observations were conducted according to the strict principles of impartiality and accuracy. TIC conducting this election monitoring in collaboration with the Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability (CISA), a leading NGO coalition of more than 30 organizations committed to promote accountability, transparency, integrity, equality and justice. TIC is a member of the Global Network of the Domestic Election Monitors and an endorser of the UN-supported Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Monitoring.

This election-monitoring project was made possible with technical and financial assistance from the **National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)**, an international non-profit and non-partisan organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. NDI has successfully pioneered the SBO technique around the world. NDI is supported by the generous assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

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