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Elections in Cambodia

2017 Local Council Elections

Frequently Asked Questions

Asia-Pacific

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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Frequently Asked Questions

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Disclosure:

These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Cambodian elections authorities as of May 30, 2017, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.

When is Election Day?

Cambodia will hold commune and *sangkat* council elections to elect their local representatives on June 4, 2017. Communes are the third-level administrative units under districts, which are subunits of provinces. *Sangkats* are also third-level administrative units under *khans*, equivalent to districts, but only in the city of Phnom Penh. These are the fourth local council elections to take place in Cambodia.

Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?

Voters will elect members to 1,646 commune or *sangkat* councils across Cambodia. Each council is comprised of five to 11 members, based on the geography and population of each commune or *sangkat*. Council and *sangkat* members go on to elect members of the provincial and district councils as well as members of the Senate, the upper house of the Cambodian Parliament.

What is the structure and function of the commune and *sangkat* councils?

Each commune and *sangkat* council is headed by a chief and two deputy chiefs. Councils are responsible for providing a variety of public services for their communes and *sangkats*, including healthcare, education and security. Commune and *sangkat* councils also play a role in dispute resolution among citizens.

Who is eligible to vote?

Eligible voters are Cambodian citizens, 18 years of age or older on Election Day, who registered during the 2016 voter registration process and hold a national identity card. A registered voter who does not have an ID card can get an identity confirmation letter issued by the Commune Election Commission and approved by the Commune Council Office. There are currently 7,865,033 citizens registered to vote.

How are voters registered in Cambodia?

In September 2016, the National Election Committee (NEC), launched a new computerized voter registry, which included the use of biometrics (photos and fingerprints of voters' thumbs) as an enhanced integrity feature. The voter registration period for the local elections ran from September 1 through November 30, 2016.

What is the electoral system for these elections?

Commune and *sangkat* council members are elected using a closed list proportional representation system. Political parties rank their candidates on a closed list, and voters cast their ballots for a political

party. Each political party is then allocated seats based on the proportion of votes cast for their party, with the candidates selected based on their rank on the party list.

Are there reserved seats for women?

There are no reserved seats for women.

Who is competing in these elections? What is the gender balance within the candidate lists?

Twelve political parties will be competing in these elections: The Cambodia People's Party (CPP); the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP); the National United Front for a Cooperative, Pacific, Neutral and Independent Cambodia (FUNCINPEC); League for Democracy Party (LDP); Khmer Unity Party (KUP); Democratic Social Beehive Party (DSBP); Khmer National Party of Cambodia (KNPC); Grassroots Democracy Party (GDP); Cambodia Youth Party (CYP); Cambodian Indigenous Democracy Party (CIDP); Khmer People's Power Party (KPPP); and Democratic Republic Party (DRP).

Political Party	Total # of candidates	Total # of women	%
CPP	27,114	6,017	22.19%
CNRP	25,487	4,091	16.05%
FUNCINPEC	12,762	4,858	38.07%
LDP	12,674	4,233	33.40%
KUP	10,417	4,180	40.13%
DSBP	3,991	1,529	38.31%
KNPC	796	420	52.76%
GDP	411	109	26.52%
CYP	338	161	47.63%
CIDP	180	38	21.11%
KPPP	218	68	31.19%
DRP	207	84	40.58%

When do elected representatives assume office?

No later than 74 days after Election Day.

What is the term of office for elected representatives?

Commune and *sangkat* council members serve a five-year term.

What is the election management body? What are its powers?

Article 150 in Chapter XV of the Constitution of Cambodia designates the National Election Committee (NEC) as the sole body in charge of organizing, regulating and administering the elections. It also stipulates that the NEC exercises its responsibilities independently and impartially in order to ensure free, accurate and fair elections in accordance with the principles of liberal, multi-party democracy. The

NEC is a nine member, multi-party committee with four members selected by the ruling party, four members selected by the non-ruling parties who hold seats in the National Assembly and one member selected by the consent of the all parties with seats in the National Assembly.

Is out-of-country voting allowed?

There is no out-of-country voting for Cambodians living abroad.

How will voters with disabilities cast their ballots?

Voters with disabilities will cast their ballots at the same polling stations as other voters. They are given priority in the line and they are permitted to bring a person of their choice to assist them in voting. Alternatively, voters with disabilities can request the assistance of the chairman of the polling station.

How many polling places are set up on Election Day?

There will be 22,148 polling stations across the country. Each polling station serves a maximum of 750 registered voters.

Where is voting, counting and tabulation held?

Voting will take place in the 22,148 polling stations across the country from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Once polling is over, the polling station becomes a counting station. At the end of counting, one result form is displayed outside the polling station, each political party representative receives a copy, one copy goes to the Communal Election Commission (CEC), one copy to the Provincial Election Commission (PEC) and one to the National Election Committee (NEC). The CEC is responsible for compiling the results of all polling stations in its commune or *sangkat*. The CEC's result compilation forms are sent to the PEC, which is in charge of the verification of the results and the allocation of the seats per commune and *sangkat*, to be sent to the NEC for final verification and announcement of the final results.

Both accredited international and national observers and political party agents are authorized to observe polling and counting operations.

Who will observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation?

Eight local NGOs will observe the electoral process in Cambodia: The Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia; Union Youth Federation Cambodia; Cambodian Democratic Student Intellectual Federation; People Development for Peace Center; Cambodia Women for Peace and Development; Human Rights Community for Development and Caring for Orphans and Poor Women; Transparency International Cambodia; the Institute of Human Resource Development, and Volunteer Intellectual and Youth Association.

The following embassies and organizations will also have a small number of representatives observe the process on polling day: The United States Embassy, the United States Agency for International Development, the People's Republic of China, the European Union, the National Democratic Institute, as well as the Belgian Embassy in Bangkok and the Polish Embassy in Bangkok.

When will official results be announced?

No later than 21 days after polling day (i.e., June 25, 2017).

How will election disputes be adjudicated?

Political party agents have the right to complain or object directly and immediately to the polling station chairperson of any irregularities related to voting and counting at any polling station where they are observing the process. If a political party agent does not agree with the decision of the chairperson, s/he has the right to file a complaint to the Communal Election Commission (CEC) no later than 11:30 a.m. on the day following Election Day. The CEC must decide on the complaint no later than three days after it has received the election results forms and the electoral materials from all polling and counting stations in the commune or *sangkat*, and reviewed and tallied the preliminary election results.

If the complainant does not agree with the decision of the CEC, s/he has the right to file a complaint to the Provincial Election Commission (PEC). The complaint must be submitted to the PEC no later than three days after the day the preliminary results of the elections have been posted at the commune or *sangkat*. Finally, if the complainant is not satisfied with the PEC's decision, they have the right to submit a complaint to the National Election Committee (NEC) no later than four days after having received the PEC's decision. The NEC's decision is final.

How will Election Day security be ensured?

The police, the special forces and the Army of the Kingdom of Cambodia are responsible for ensuring electoral security. The National Election Committee has released a 15-page code of conduct for the Armed forces, National Police and election security. Violators of the code may be fined or otherwise penalized.

Resources

- Cambodia National Election Committee website ([English](#), [Khmer](#))
- Constitution of Cambodia ([English](#))
- Law on Election of Commune Councils ([English](#))
- Law on the Organization and the Functioning of the National Election Committee ([English](#))
- “NEC issues code of conduct for army during elections,” *The Phnom Penh Post* ([English](#))
- “Voice, Choice and Decision: A Study of Local Governance Processes in Cambodia,” The Asia Foundation and the World Bank ([English](#))