

Cambodia 2011



Total: 13.73

Quick facts

Population:	14.7 million
Population growth:	1.69 %
Unemployment rate:	3.5 %
GDP:	30.18 billion \$
GDP growth rate:	6 %
GDP per capita:	2100 \$

Political Freedom

Free and Fair Elections : 2.14

There are concerns regarding the relevance of the electoral process in Cambodia. While, at least in theory, the constitution and corresponding laws provide for free and fair elections, in practice things are different.

The last parliamentary elections took place in 2008 and, compared to earlier polls, (especially those in 2003), there were fewer incidents of pre-electoral violence. Fewer cases of vote-buying and intimidation occurred, and international observers stated that some progress could be noted. However, it is worrying that some of the irregularities were allegedly perpetrated by Prime Minister Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP), which dominates the country's political scene. Evidence suggests that the CPP successfully bought and/or intimidated competitors.

Political pluralism and participation is almost non-existent: By means of repression and threat, the CPP aims to establish a quasi one-party system. There are two opposition parties: The Sam Rainsy Party (SRP), whose leader is forced to live in exile since having been sentenced to 12 years in jail in 2009, and the Human Rights Party (HRP). Cambodians enjoy little space to take part in politics.

Absence of Unconstitutional Veto Players : 2.5

The power of the Cambodian government remains largely unchallenged; there are no veto powers

that pose a threat. Civilian control over military and security forces has been established officially. By constitutional standards, there are no veto players in the political system of Cambodia. However, the Cambodian constitution does not comply with democratic standards, and government officials are not necessarily accountable to the public. This explains why Cambodia scores relatively low in this section, even though there are no noteworthy veto players.

Freedom of Press : 3.7

The freedom of press, speech and expression in Cambodia is restricted. Governmental control of the media focuses on national broadcasting stations, as they are a major source of information for most Cambodians. Satellite-dishes are tolerated, though, and make it possible to receive uncensored information from abroad. Newspapers and other print media enjoy only limited freedom to criticise the government; journalists who report on sensitive issues often experience harassment by officials, beatings, and death threats. The internet is generally free from governmental control, but few people have access to it.

Rule of Law

Independence of the Judiciary :

No data available.

Corruption : 2.1

Corruption is quite a serious problem and threatens to hinder social and economic development, and stability. Many high- ranking officials abuse their power for their private benefit. This is true also for the judicial branch, which suffers from courts not always being independent and impartial. Corruption poses a major threat to the process of democratisation, as well; the current Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International ranks Cambodia as only number 154 of 178 surveyed countries, which highlights the severity of this particular problem.

Protection of Human Rights : 3.29

On the positive side, it has to be acknowledged that Cambodia abolished the death penalty several years ago. However, the situation of human rights in Cambodia has deteriorated since 2009, when conflicts between government and opposition were aggravated. Forced dislocation and land grabbing occur regularly, and are one of the major human rights problems in Cambodia.

A case in 2009 underscored Cambodia's rather indifferent stance towards human rights: A group of Uyghur refugees was sent back to China despite having been issued "Person of Concern" letters by the UNHCR. While some of them were sentenced to long prison terms, the fate of others is unknown. In deporting the Uyghur refugees, Cambodia violated international law.

Another critical subject is inequality between the genders; even though the constitution grants

equal treatment, the situation for women is problematic. Social and economic discrimination is commonplace; domestic violence, such as beatings and rapes, not only occur frequently but, in most cases, also go unpunished.

Economic Freedom

Security of Property Rights :

No data available.

Size of Government: Expenditures, Taxes, and Enterprises :

No data available.

Regulation of Credit, Labour, and Business :

No data available.

Freedom to Trade Internationally :

No data available.