

Cambodia Welcomes Same-Sex Marriage, Gov't Spokesman Says

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443 views

PHNOM PENH (Khmer Times) – Council of Ministers spokesman Phay Siphon expressed support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Cambodia yesterday, responding to Nepal's new constitution – which has been described as the first in Asia to enshrine protection for the rights of LGBT people.

He said Cambodia has already gone further. “Cambodian society does not discriminate against LGBT people. It is only individuals who do so,” he said. “No Cambodian laws discriminate against them, and nothing is banning them from loving each other or getting married,” he said.

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) yesterday lauded Nepal's constitutional protection of LGBT rights, but described Cambodia as a less welcoming country for LGBT people than Mr. Siphon did.

“Although domestic law in Cambodia does not criminalize homosexuality, LGBT Cambodians face discrimination and abuse due to their SOGI [Sexual Orientation and Gender Identify], both at the hands of the state and within society in general,” CCHR said in a press release.

“This impacts the way in which LGBT Cambodians are seen by society and contributes to fueling discrimination and marginalization.”

The NGO has a project devoted to the people it refers to as SOGIs. CCHR SOGI project coordinator Nuon Sidara said that Nepal's move “provides a vivid reminder that similar protections are not currently afforded to Cambodian LGBT people.”

“I urge the RGC [Royal Government of Cambodia] to immediately take measures to introduce laws to remedy this and which provide equality for LGBT people and prohibit discrimination on the basis of SOGI.”

Mr. Siphon said lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are free to love – and marry – here.

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