Research evidence from reports, consultations and surveys show that in the last five years, self-censorship related to political expression has become acute in Cambodia.

Vaguely-worded provisions in the domestic law provide for online surveillance, data collection and sharing of data. These have caused anxiety over monitoring of online communications. Unannounced internet disruptions and concerns over eavesdropping of private communications have additionally unsettled internet users.

As a result, internet users have stepped back from expressing or sharing their political opinions online, resorted to consuming online content privately, ceased to access political content and avoided online political participation for fear of being surveilled and persecuted.

Asia Centre recommends that the Cambodian government
- Undertakes broad consultation on the issue of self-censorship, its causes and concerns.
- Legislates law on data protection and privacy to regulate the monitoring, storage and sharing of personal information.
- Limits the processing of personal data to what is strictly prescribed in the law.
- Establishes an independent committee to oversee the handling and sharing of data between ministries and law enforcement agencies.

This statement on Cambodia is based on Asia Centre’s report Internet Freedoms in Cambodia: A Gateway to Control, launched on 1 September 2021.