

# Hun Sen Calls for More Talks on NGO Law

Kong Sotharith, VOA Khmer | Phnom Penh

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The Cambodian government on Wednesday took a step back on a controversial law to regulate NGOs, with Prime Minister Hun Sen saying in a public speech he wanted the Ministry of Interior and local NGOs to continue discussions that would make the law “acceptable” to all.

The draft law has come under continued criticism from international and local NGOs, who say it will stymie their work and expose them to arbitrary legal measures if enacted.

But Hun Sen also made it clear that the draft law would not be dropped altogether.

“If there is no agreement in 2012, it must wait until 2013,” he said at a graduation ceremony in Phnom Penh. “And if it is not until 2013, it will not die,” he said.

While some groups have said the law is altogether unnecessary, others have said it needs further revision to ensure that small associations can form, that registration not hamper the work of NGOs and that it not leave groups who dissent with government positions open to closure or other legal repercussions.

A US Embassy spokesman told VOA Khmer Wednesday the US has not changed its position on the draft law and that the government should “refrain from passing any new law that restricts rather than enhances the important role of civil society in Cambodia.”

<http://www.voanews.com/khmer-english/news/Hun-Sen-Calls-for-More-Talks-on-NGO-Law-136319558.html>