



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**Cambodia Congratulated, Highly Appreciated
For Successfully Hosting 55th AMM and Related Meetings**

Cambodia has been congratulated and commended for successfully hosting the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (55th AMM) and Related Meetings, from 29 July to 05 August 2022 in Phnom Penh. Following are the excerpts from the articles /analysis/comments published in some media outlets:

1. Bravo ASEAN (Jakarta Post's Editorial / 08 August 2022)

- Speaking on behalf of the chair of ASEAN, Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn reminded all foreign ministers participating in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) on Friday that they must maintain composure, dignity, good manners and civilized discussions. The message is very clear that ASEAN as the host has the privilege to set up rules and everybody must respect them -- so do not mess up ASEAN's home.
- Amid growing global tension due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as increasing tension between China and the United States on Taiwan, the world needs a formal forum where they can at least express their standpoint. And ASEAN has come forward to offer itself as the place for the world's major powers to feel comfortable. ASEAN as the host always tries not to be trapped in the middle of a fight between their guests.
- One of the reasons for the obedience of the ASEAN guests to the rules of the game was because ASEAN had succeeded in solving its most difficult internal problem, by punishing the Myanmar junta under Gen. Min Aung Hlaing for its barbaric acts. To the surprise of some members, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen had proven he was a responsible chair of the regional grouping, although deep in his heart he might prefer to stay away from Myanmar's internal affairs.

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- As a pragmatic leader, Hun Sen realized that taking side with the murderous junta leader would only tarnish his position among ASEAN leaders. As the world's longest-serving prime minister, he also has his problems at home. But regardless of his real motive, Hun Sen deserves a big round of applause.
- During the ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting, Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates signed the instrument of accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). Now 49 countries including the US, China, Japan, France, the United Kingdom, India and Canada have signed the treaty.
- Today is ASEAN's 55th anniversary. Bravo to ASEAN for the impressive progress achieved during the Phnom Penh ministerial meeting and happy birthday.

2. ASEAN at 55: Alive and Kicking

(by Kavi Chongkittavorn / Thai PBS World / August 06, 2022)

- . . . As the current chair, Cambodia has worked very hard to display ASEAN centrality and solidarity at its best. The outcome of ASEAN annual meeting was evidence of these diligent efforts. Indeed, the chair has restored the much-needed credibility it deserves, after the malfeasance of a decade ago. All concerned authorities and the Cambodian people, most of all, should be proud.
- ASEAN also reiterated that it stands ready to play a constructive role in facilitating peaceful dialogue through ASEAN-led mechanisms. At the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), all 27-member countries shared their views about regional and international challenges. Their common and divergent views have already made the ARF meeting unique, as all major powers of the world are involved. Better still was the East Asia Summit foreign ministerial meeting, which enabled key global players to come face to face to exchange views, without resorting to confrontation.

3. 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting: Much Ado About Everything (or Nothing)?

(by Sharon Seah, Joanne Lin, Melinda Martinus / Fulcrum, 08 Aug. 2022)

. Here are six critical takeaways from the meetings:

1. Cross Strait Development: A New Litmus Test for ASEAN



- ASEAN foreign ministers seemed unfazed and responded with a timely and prompt, first-ever stand-alone statement on "Cross Strait Development". To ASEAN's credit, the consensus statement covered all bases, from expressing concern about "regional volatility" and "potential miscalculation" to calls for "maximum restraint". The clincher was a firm reiteration of support for member states' "respective One-China policy" (sic). The statement was ASEAN diplomatic artistry

2. Myanmar Crisis: Mounting Collective Pressure

- Developments in Myanmar were reportedly discussed extensively over the series of meetings. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen's opening remarks gave a hint of where discussions might head. It was a surprisingly tough stance: if more political prisoners are executed, then ASEAN will be forced to rethink its role vis-a-vis the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus. . . .
- ASEAN was unanimous in its disappointment in the limited progress made in the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus. The Joint Communiqué recommended that a progress assessment on the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus be made at the ASEAN Summit in November to "guide the decision on the next steps". While some may take this as the Foreign Ministers deferring the decision to the Leaders, it may also be taken as a three-month grace period for the SAC to demonstrate some goodwill towards ASEAN. What "progress" looks like is up for debate. It is understood that a special meeting before the November Summit may be convened to discuss the way forward, possibly to rethink a new approach to Myanmar.

3. Timor-Leste's Accession: Maybe Next Year

- Timor-Leste's application for ASEAN membership appears to have made better progress with the F.M.s agreeing to "accelerate" the process for its application. Timor-Leste's Foreign Minister Adaljiza Magno was invited as a guest and held a series of bilateral meetings with several counterparts on the sidelines. From the looks of it, the stage is set for Timor-Leste to join ASEAN by the time Indonesia takes over as ASEAN Chair in 2023.

4. Expanding External Relations: Playing to ASEAN's Gain

- On Ukraine, ASEAN appeared to have mended its fences with the first two opening lines entrenching itself well on the correct side of international law,

notably "... as for all nations, we continue to reaffirm our respect for sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity" and reiterating its call for compliance with international law and the United Nations Charter. Again, it managed to do so with no mention of Russia.

- On the external relations front, six countries acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) at a signing ceremony on 3 August. Ukraine's application to TAC was also considered with no objections from any foreign ministers (noting that Myanmar was absent from the table). ASEAN conferred Sectoral Dialogue Partnership (SDP) status to Brazil and the United Arab Emirates (joining Norway, Pakistan, Switzerland and Turkey in this category). ASEAN also held its inaugural ministerial meeting with the United Kingdom, ASEAN's 11th dialogue partner. Importantly, ASEAN also announced that its Dialogue Partner relationship with the U.S. and India would be elevated to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership later in November (after China and Australia last year).

5. Cambodia's Chairmanship: Mid-Term Scorecard

- As Chair of the meetings, Cambodia handled both the substance and the dynamics ably, redeeming it from its decade-old failure to issue a joint communique for the first time in ASEAN's history in 2012. Not only did Cambodia manage to issue a timely response to a breaking development in ASEAN's own backyard, it managed to deliver a 119-paragraph Joint Communique addressing all the key points of contention (Myanmar, Ukraine, ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific) well before the conclusion of all the meetings. It goes to show the level of coordination the host invested and its determination to ensure that text negotiations would not be reopened at the last minute. The decision to move the Cross Strait Development statement out of the Joint Communique was a good one as it risked scuttling the negotiated text.

6. ASEAN Convening Power: Unity First

- The dynamics at this first in-person ASEAN Ministerial Meeting since the Covid-19 pandemic were as unpredictable and volatile as the geopolitical environment. Tensions were reportedly high in the series of 15 meetings that ASEAN conducted with its dialogue and external partners. ASEAN's central

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role became peripheral when the East Asia Summit (EAS) turned into a forum for a highly charged finger-pointing blame game among the major powers.

- Staffers were cracking their heads over where to seat the Russian Foreign Minister at the meetings. The host solved the seating protocol at the EAS reportedly by asking Philippines Undersecretary Theresa Lazaro to sit between the U.S. and Russia.
- It is without a doubt that ASEAN retained its convening power to bring world powers to the table. However, this in itself is insufficient to command attention when it comes to real-world politics. ASEAN claims to be able to play a facilitating role in the cross-strait tensions, but the truth is, forging a united position among its members in regional issues — even those close to home such as Myanmar — remains a challenge. Despite ASEAN's best efforts (unity, centrality, etc), it remains hostage to great power politics.

4. Research Institute's publication and EU representative give Cambodia good ratings as ASEAN Chair

(by Taing Rinith / Khmer Times / 10 August 2022)

- Midway through its position as the Rotating Chair of ASEAN, Cambodia has been praised for its role and contributions as Chair of ASEAN and for successfully hosting the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting last week.
- ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, a research institution formerly known as the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies until its name change in 2015 in honour of Singapore's First President Yusof Ishak, in its analysis published on its online political platform Fulcrum Commentary complimented Cambodia for its ability in handling the current tensions as the Chair of Asean based on the results of the 55th Asean Foreign Ministers Meeting held in Phnom Penh last week.
- "As Chair of the meetings, Cambodia handled both the substance and the dynamics ably, redeeming it from its decade-old failure to issue a joint communique for the first time in Asean's history in 2012," said the report (its detailed contents are in point 3. **55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting: Much Ado About Everything (or Nothing) ?**)
- In an interview with *Khmer Times* on Friday, Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy



gave Cambodia credit for its initiative to diminish the violence in Myanmar in spite of its limited success.

- "[As Asean Chairman], Cambodia is playing its role, even engaging a lot, politically and personally in the Myanmar issue," he said.
- "Cambodia's Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn, also acting as the ASEAN Special Envoy, has engaged a lot in order to make the Junta understand that it has to change. Unfortunately, it was not successful."
- Fontelles said Cambodia, having done its best, should not be blamed for the failure to bring peace to Myanmar.
- "It is not their fault; it was the Junta's," he added. "This execution of the four political activists is the worst news that we have had this year."
- "I praise the Cambodian government for its effort, and I appreciate the role that it had played as the Chair of Asean," he added.

5. Kingdom's positions at 'lively' FM meets 'bold'

(by Niem Chheng / Phnom Penh Post / 09 August 2022).

- Analysts and observers of regional politics have noted several key takeaways from the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) and related meetings, which Cambodia recently hosted. It was the first time in two years that the summit was held in-person, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Prak Sokhonn said that in some cases the "lively" meetings were "heated" due to the current state of global affairs.
- Following the primary meeting, a 29-page joint communique was released, but prior to that, ASEAN had also issued a statement on the increasing tensions across the Taiwan Strait following the visit of US Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi to the self-governing island, which China has long claimed as its territory under its "One China" policy.
- Three analysts at the Singapore-based think-tank FULCRUM at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute's ASEAN Studies Centre – Sharon Seah, Joanne Lin and Melinda Martinus – outlined six points of interest to recap last week's meetings, on topics ranging from Pelosi's visit to Taiwan to the Myanmar crisis and the unity of the ASEAN bloc. (These six points can be found in point 3.

55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting: Much Ado About Everything (or Nothing) ?

- Prime Minister Hun Sen noted last week that some leaders who attended the meetings objected to being seated near their rivals, but he said that the participants had mostly understood the situation as Cambodia is hosting the meeting during a time of unprecedented complexity in global politics.
- "Even the seating arrangements were hard to figure out due to the conflict in some regions of Europe. So, the seats had to be separated from each other and it was not easy," he said, adding that Cambodia nevertheless managed to do it.
- Kin Phea, director of the Royal Academy of Cambodia's International Relations Institute, said Cambodia generally had positive takeaways from the summit as its host, ranging from the successful preparations, excellent hospitality provided to the dignitaries and the smooth handling of diplomatic protocols.
- He said Cambodia has now proven that it has an advanced capacity to facilitate and manage these high-level diplomatic meetings and manage to produce a joint statement as a result of each of them, which is no easy task in today's geopolitical environment.
- "The meeting showed Cambodia's clear stance as the ASEAN chair in favour of building the ASEAN community and maintaining ASEAN Centrality, which is the chair's most important role," he said, adding that the Kingdom's profile has also been raised accordingly.
- Regarding the Taiwan issue, Phea said Cambodia and ASEAN had dealt with it in a smart way through a statement which was acceptable to the US, China and Russia, while also making clear ASEAN's core interests in diffusing tensions and its preference for peaceful negotiations rather than armed conflict.

6. **After the meeting, Singapore FM Vivian Balakrishnan congratulated Cambodia on its successful hosting of the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting.** (H.E. Vivian Balakrishnan's Facebook / 06 August 2022)

- "We are in a dangerous moment in world affairs. The successful EAS & ARF is testament to ASEAN's convening role in keeping the regional architecture

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open, inclusive & fostering dialogue & diplomacy” the Singaporean Foreign Minister wrote on his official social media account.

- “Congratulations to Cambodia for successfully hosting the 55th AMM,” he continued.

7. Chinese FM praises Cambodia for contributing positively to East Asian cooperation (Khmer Times / 08 August 2022)

- Speaking at a press conference after attending the ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting and Related Meetings on the evening of 5 August, State Councilor Wang Yi said that Cambodia has done well and successfully in contribute positively to East Asian cooperation.
- “We will continue to strongly support Cambodia. I am confident that Cambodia will fulfill its role as the rotating Chair of ASEAN and will promote China-ASEAN relations to reach a new level,” he said.

8. Pakistan FM (Press Release of the MFAIC / 06 August 2022)

- During a meeting with DPM Prak Sokhoon on 06 August 2022, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari congratulated Cambodia for the success in hosting the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting and Related Meetings.

9. Timor-Leste FM (Press Release of the MFAIC / 06 Aug 2022)

- Foreign Minister Adaljiza Xavier Reis Magno congratulated Cambodia for the success in hosting the 55th ASEAN Ministers’ Meeting and Relating Meetings in the bilateral meeting with DPM Prak Sokhoon.

10. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken departed Phnom Penh with optimism, after participating in the 55th AMM and Related Meetings hosted by Cambodia. (Khmer Times / August 7, 2022)

- “As I depart Cambodia, I am reflecting on the meetings I had with ASEAN Foreign Ministers and other regional leaders. We made progress toward our shared goals.” he tweeted.
- “I leave with optimism about the progress we can still make together toward our vision for the Indo-Pacific region,” he added.
- At a press conference earlier on the same day, Blinken reaffirmed that the US will continue to have a positive relationship with Cambodia based on the existing cooperation such as export markets and development assistance.

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- During his stay in Phnom Penh, he also announced a new U\$25 million project to promote food security and economic growth in Cambodia's agriculture sector.

11. Press Statement of US-ASEAN Business Council (07 August 2022)

Following is the excerpt from the Press Statement on Secretary of State Blinken attending ARF in Cambodia issued by USABC:

- The Council hopes that as Members of Congress debate legislation that can directly impact the future of U.S.-ASEAN relations and the IPS, such as the Cambodia Democracy Act, it will appreciate the broader implications of imposing unilateral economic sanctions on Cambodia as the current Chairman of ASEAN. Unilateral sanctions and stigmatization could seriously harm U.S. security interests by pushing Cambodia closer to China at a time when Cambodia continues to make impressive strides on economic growth and sustainability issues of importance to American companies and investors.
- Following the Secretary's meeting with the Prime Minister of Cambodia on the sidelines of the ARF, we encourage continued dialogue and diplomacy around issues pertaining to human rights, labor rights, and China's use of Cambodian military facilities rather than counterproductive economic sanctions written into law."

12. Greece FM (Press Release of the MFAIC / 02 August 2022)

- During a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Prak Sokhonn, Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias appreciated Cambodia's support in acceding into the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) and congratulated Cambodia for the success of its ASEAN Chairmanship. 

Phnom Penh, 11 August 2022
Spokesperson of the MFAIC
Chum Sounry