



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**  
**NATION - RELIGION - KING**

ROYAL EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA  
TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Press Release**

**On the Signing Ceremony for the Return of 27 Cambodian Artifacts**

-----

H.E. Mr. Chum Sounry, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United States of America, and Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr., District Attorney of New York County, have signed an Agreement between the Kingdom of Cambodia and the District Attorney (DA) of New York County for the transfer of custody of 27 objects of trafficked Cambodian antiquities from the DA's Office to the Kingdom of Cambodia, in a signing ceremony held at the DA's Office on June 9, 2021.

H.E. Dr. Phoeurng Sackona, Minister of Culture and Fine Arts of Cambodia, has joined virtually from Phnom Penh to witness the signing. H.E. Ambassador Ker Sovann, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations, was also present.

The 27 artifacts, which have been recovered by the DA's Office and the United States Department of Homeland Security, include several Angkorian Buddhist statues and Hindu statues such as a bronze meditating Buddha on a Naga, a statue of Shiva and a Buddhist sandstone sculpture of Prajnaparamita. The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts of Cambodia has played an important role in coordinating and reaching this historic agreement with the DA's Office.

Minister Phoeurng Sackona, while addressing the ceremony extended, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia her gratitude and praise for the cooperation and assistance provided by the New York District Attorney's Office, U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, US Embassy in Cambodia, Cambodian Embassy in Washington, D.C. and the working group of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in bringing our cultural objects



back to Cambodia. She also expressed gratitude to all related institutions and dignitaries in both the public and private sectors and *MuseumsPartner* for their dedicated collaboration to make today a reality despite the spread of the global pandemic of COVID-19.”

The Minister also said that the return of these artifacts exemplified the friendship and noble results of the cooperation between Cambodia and the United States with respect to restoring our country’s cultural heritage. “The Royal Government of Cambodia is committed to searching and bringing back all of our stolen artifacts,” she underlined.

For his part, Ambassador Chum Sounry underlined in his remarks “The return of these Antiquities proves once again the fruitful results of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Royal Government of Cambodia and the U.S. government that has marked the new page of the very good bilateral cooperation on cultural preservation between both Nations.” “We hope the United States will continue its partnership with Cambodia so that we can put a complete end to the illegal trafficking of Khmer cultural properties and to return our cultural heritage back to our country,” he added.

The Ambassador called on and encouraged all collectors of Khmer antiquities to consider carefully the provenance of their pieces and to realize that the majority of Khmer cultural properties outside of Cambodia were illegally removed and trafficked and should be returned to the country.

The Envoy expressed appreciation to the District Attorney of New York County and the Department of Homeland Security for this noble cooperation.

Washington D.C., June 9, 2021

