

Joint Statement

On Current Human Rights Situation Regarding the Arrest and Detention of CNRP's Lawmakers- Elect and Political Activist

Phnom Penh, July 21, 2014

We, Civil Society Group, non-governmental, non-profit and non-political organizations in Cambodia consider that the arrest and detention of CNRP's lawmakers-elected is completely politically-motivated rather than implementing the rule of law, and this act is violated the fundamental freedom and democratization process in Cambodia.

From 15 to 21 July 2014 there were at least eight political activists from CNRP had been arrested and detained. Seven of them are Lawmaker – elected candidates including one political activist. The arrest was occurred while performing their duty, demanding for the reopening of the freedom park in order to have a full exercise of freedom of expression and assembly. The government has reportedly been seeking to arrest more people, allegedly in connection to violent clash that took place on 15 July 2014.

Civil Society observed that Cambodian Government is threatening the exercise of rights to freedom of expression and assembly which is an essence of human rights'principle, enshrined in the Cambodian National Constitution¹. It is to remind that the rights to freedom of expression and assembly is an essential element exercising in many demoncratic countries such as Cambodia.

As a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, The Government of Cambodia must adhere with its obligation. Article 19 paragraph 2 stated that "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regard less of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice."

Civil Society also observed that the respect of human rights and democratic environemnt's space is very limited and it has tremendously impacted the fundemental human rights and freedom of Cambodian; particularly the exercise of freedom of expression and assembly. Furthermore, Cambodian Government had been issuing a number of Executive Regulations, intending to curtail and distract the full expercise of fundamental freedom of its own population. Furthermore, it fails to refrain the violent incidents occurred during the post election: the violent incidents that took place in Steung Meanchey, Veng Sreng road, Monivong bridge, and Yak Zhing garment factory, and did not take any legal action against those who instigated such deadly violent act against civilians. Similarly, we observed that the government has also completely failed to take action against those so-called private security Force hired by Khan Daun Penh authority, and who had violently beaten and injured journalist and civilain during which they were exercising their rights to freedom of assembly.

In a press release made by the president of National Assembly Heng Samrin on September 23, 2013, who had publicly announced the validity of the 123 Lawmaker-elected; therefore, the arrest and detention of the seven of CNRP's Lawmakers-elected is completely unconstitutional, particularly it violates article 80 which states that "No Member of the National Assembly shall be prosecuted, detained or arrested because of opinions expressed in the exercise of his/her duties.

We, Civil Society group calls upon the government of Cambodia to unconditionally release all lawmaker-elected and political activist and immediately stop further arrest of others. We also urge the Government of Cambodia to conduct a thorough investigation to look into what is called violent incident that took place on 15 July 2014 and the previous deadly incidents in order to hold those responsible accountable and to reopen the Freedom Park. At the same time, we urge both political parties to hold a peaceful dialogue, solely based upon national interest in order to resolve the current political deadlock as to improve political situation and to allow respect of human rights that is a fundamental democracy in Cambodia.

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CSOs and NGOs endorsing the statement:

1. The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
2. Committee for Free and Fair Election in Cambodia (COMFREL)
3. Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC)
4. NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGO Forum)
5. Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)
6. Housing Rights Task Force (HRTF)
7. Neutral and Independent Committee for Free and Fair Election in Cambodia (NICFEC)
8. Coalition of Cambodian Farmer Community (CCFC)
9. Cambodia's Independent Civil-Servants Association (CICA)
10. Cambodian Youth Network (CYN)
11. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
12. Cambodian Food and Service Worker Federation (CFSWF)
13. Khmer Youth and Social Development (KYSD)
14. Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP)
15. Khmer Youth Association (KYA)
16. Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility (CARAM Cambodia)
17. Indradevi Association (IDA)
18. The Cambodian Center for Protection of Children's Rights (CCPCR)
19. Building Community Voices (BCV)
20. Khmer Institute for National Development(KIND)
21. Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)
22. Cambodian Defenders Project (CDP)
23. People Center for Development and Peace (PDP-Center)
24. Khmer Kampuchea Krom for Human Rights and Development Association (KKKHRDA)
25. Legal Aid of Cambodia (LAC)
26. The Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC)
27. Human Rights Vigilance of Cambodia (VIGILANCE)
28. Protection of Juvenile Justice (PJJ)
29. Mission of Generous Cambodian Alliance (Generous)
30. Cambodian Health and Human Rights Alliance (CHHRA)