Ms. Eng Kimhong
Journalist of Radio France International (“RFI”)

Ms. Eng Kimhong, 30 years old, was born in Khsach Kandal District, Kandal Province. She obtained a Bachelor’s degree in law from the Royal University of Law and Economics. Ms. Kimhong has been working as a Khmer-language journalist at Radio France International (“RFI”) in Phnom Penh for almost 10 years. Before becoming a journalist, Ms. Kimhong learned how to write news articles and volunteered with media organizations. She also continues to join trainings with many other journalists despite her full-time job at RFI.

Ms. Kimhong had always wanted to pursue a career in journalism. Although she initially wanted to be a TV presenter, she became interested in working for a radio station when she started working as a journalist. Another factor that contributed to her successful career was the encouragement of her family, especially her husband: “Even my husband never discouraged me. He encourages me to move forward.” In addition, she believes that the media have contributed to bringing issues to the attention of the relevant leaders, and to providing solutions to those problems.

During her career, she covered a wide range of topics, including economics, politics, and infrastructure development. However, what she likes the most is reporting on social issues because of the positive impacts her reporting can have: “I like covering social issues because when we do, it seems to provide a lot of benefits to the victims, including children, women, people with disabilities, and LGBT individuals.” As a journalist for almost 10 years, Ms. Kimhong has never been subjected to threats or harassment, but she faced other challenges: “What I found difficult in my nearly 10-year career as a journalist is finding sources of information, and especially getting responses from the government.”

For Ms. Kimhong, media has a strong influence in society. She says the current situation of press freedom in Cambodia remains fragile, and that journalists should be careful, but not afraid. She explained that, in order to be “careful,” journalists should verify the accuracy of any information with the relevant stakeholders before publishing anything to avoid misunderstandings among the public. In order not to be “afraid,” she said journalists must respect their profession to avoid any unwanted consequences: “to protect ourselves, we must respect journalism.”

Based on her reporting experience, Ms. Kimhong acknowledged that the right to freedom of expression of citizens who have an interest in following political developments is restricted. She said some people refused to give interviews on political topics because they were afraid of facing accusations or being arrested for expressing their views. Regarding the state of press freedom, Ms. Kimhong believes that journalists can do their job, but she wants them to be able to fully exercise their freedoms to provide accurate information to the people and contribute to the development of society.

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