PRESS RELEASE
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CCHR TRIAL MONITORING PROJECT RELEASES FIRST BI-ANNUAL REPORT: 
“FAIR TRIAL RIGHTS IN CAMBODIA”

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”) today releases a report entitled “Fair Trial Rights in Cambodia” (the “Report”). The Report is the first bi-annual publication produced by the Trial Monitoring Project (the “Project”) implemented by CCHR and supported by the United States Government, through the United States Agency for International Development and the East West Management Institute.

The Report contains data from 199 trials monitored at Phnom Penh Capital Court and Kandal Provincial Court between August 10 and December 31, 2009, the first reporting period. The Report notes areas in which the courts are performing well, for example, informing the accused of the nature of the charge with which they are faced, and managing the examination of evidence and witnesses fairly. However, it raises concerns in relation to high levels of pre-trial detention, lack of legal representation and perceptions of impartiality resulting from the conduct of judges at the two courts. Recommendations are set out for improving adherence to these fair trial rights.

The purpose of the Project is to monitor trials in Cambodia to assess their fairness against international and Cambodian fair trial standards and to use the findings as a basis for constructive dialogue with judges and other stakeholders. Over the coming months Project staff will seek to meet with the judges at the courts monitored, representatives of the Ministry of Justice, and other stakeholders to discuss the findings of the Report and ideas for improving adherence to fair trial rights in Cambodia.

CCHR hopes that the Report will serve as a useful tool for research and study related to fair trial rights and the functioning of courts in Cambodia. It is available to view or download in Khmer and English on the Cambodian Human Rights portal www.sithi.org and on the CCHR website, www.cchrcambodia.org.

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