PRESS RELEASE – PHNOM PENH, 6 JULY 2009

THE CCHR SUPPORTS NATIONAL PREAH VIHEAR DAY

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights would like to extend our warmest regards to all Cambodians on National Preah Vihear Day, 7 July 2009, and to commend the way in which the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia has conducted itself throughout the border dispute with Thailand. Moreover, the CCHR hopes that the Sunday lunch shared by Khmer and Thai troops on 5 July 2009 is evidence that the tensions at the border are coming to an end.

The CCHR recalls our 6 May 2009 Report entitled Preah Vihear, Kingdom of Cambodia – Legal Analysis of the Events of 3 April 2009 that Resulted in the Destruction of a Village and Damage to the Preah Vihear Temple. In that report, the CCHR found that probable cause exists for believing that the 3 April 2009 attacks on Preah Vihear Temple and the neighbouring village, Psar Cheung Prasat (Market at the Foot of the Mountain), were a breach of international law and that the Thai authorities responsible for the attacks were guilty of war crimes. The report offered a number of recommendations to the Cambodian Government, including, but not limited to, governmental provision by Cambodia of humanitarian assistance to the displaced residents of the village and a claim for compensation by Cambodia from Thailand for the damage caused to the Temple and the surrounding area. The CCHR commends the Cambodian Government for adopting these recommendations by subsequently providing humanitarian assistance to the estimated 319 displaced families and seeking $2million compensation from the Thai Government. The CCHR would like to remind the Cambodian Government of the remaining recommendations contained in our report, such as the recommendation that the Cambodian Government request a neutral body, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the United Nations (UN), to carry out further detailed investigations into the events of 3 April 2009 in order to corroborate the findings in our report and to strengthen the compensation claim against Thailand.

The issue of the location of Preah Vihear Temple was conclusively and categorically determined by the decision of 15 June 1962 of the ICJ which found the Temple to be located under the sovereignty of Cambodia. The CCHR recalls that Thailand in fact complied with the decision of the ICJ by removing all military and police officers from the vicinity of the Temple after the Court delivered its judgment.

The CCHR hopes that the tension at the border between Cambodia and Thailand is coming to an end and that Thailand will fully acknowledge the fact that Preah Vihear Temple is located in Cambodia. The CCHR applauds the diplomacy with which the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia has dealt with this issue. Finally, we hope that all Cambodians will enjoy a peaceful celebration of National Preah Vihear Day.

For more information, please contact:
Mr. Ou Virak, President, CCHR
Tel: +855 12 404051
Email: ouvirak@cchrcambodia.org

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights, No. 798, St. 99, Sangkat Boeung Trabek, Khan Chamkarmorn, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.