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Press Freedom in Cambodia is seriously under threat

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) is very concerned with the high number of cases of human rights abuses against journalists and other media workers in Cambodia. Press freedom in Cambodia is seriously under threat.

In 2008 alone, the CCHR has documented and monitored at least 61 human rights abuses against journalists and media workers. Of this figure, there were 15 threats including death threats, threats to commence legal action, and threats to withhold licenses to operate.; 14 arrests made for spurious reasons; and 5 cases of law suits claiming defamation and disinformation being used to silence the media.

The arrest of Mr. Dam Sith, editor in chief of the pro-opposition Moneasika Khmer newspaper and a Sam Rainsy Party candidate for the parliamentary election, was a good example of how political motivations often lie behind charges of defamation and disinformation brought against journalists.

Even worse was the murder of Mr. Khim Sambo, reporter of Moneasika Khmer, along with his son in the run-up to the general election in July 2008. No perpetrator has been brought to justice.

In 2009, as of today, we have observed 8 human rights abuses against journalists including killing, death threats, physical assault, lawsuits, and arrests for alleged extortion.

Given the high figure of human rights violations involving journalist and the media in general, the CCHR calls upon the Royal Government of Cambodia to take appropriate action and follow the recommendations recently made by more than 20 non-governmental organisations in a joint report on freedom of expression and assembly to guarantee press freedom in Cambodia and bring the perpetrators of criminal acts against journalists to justice.

For more information, please contact:

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