CCHR protests against the arbitrary detention of two of its staffs and a monk ordered by the Governor of Kampot

Phnom Penh, March 2nd, 2006

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) demands from the newly appointed Governor of Kampot Province from FUNCIPEC, Thach Khorn, to issue a public apology for the brief detention of its regional director for Takeo, Kampot and Kep, Phan Soeun, another CCHR staff member and a monk in Trapang Kleang Commune on Wednesday. The detention of the three persons who were preparing a public forum of CCHR and the confiscation of their car were not justified by any means. The Governor abused his power by ordering the action. "Detaining human rights defenders arbitrarily is an act of crude intimidation", said Kem Sokha, CCHR president. "It contradicts the spirit of improving the relation between the Cambodian authorities and the civil society organizations that was experienced in the previous weeks", Kem Sokha added.

The detention took place at 11:50 a.m. when the two CCHR activists were entering the Kch Star Pagoda in Srae Liew village for discussing details about the public forum with the chief monk. During the more than four hours detention, no water or food was offered. The same morning, the village had been visited by the Governor and the Minister for Agriculture, Chan Sarun, for a groundbreaking ceremony for a road construction. The land of Srae Liew village is part of a concession of more than 8,000 hectares which was recently granted to a little known company called "Christian Star". On February 2nd the Governor himself had tried to bring in materials for the road construction but was blocked by several hundred villagers.

The three persons were released in the evening on the same day.

For questions and interviews please call Mr. Ou Virak, Advocacy and Public Relations of CCHR, Tel. 012-404051.

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