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Media Comment: CCHR condemns probationary sentencing for acid attacks

Kampong Cham Provincial Court yesterday sentenced a 25-year-old woman to three years of probation instead of two years in jail for dousing a mother and her two children with acid. This comes at a time when the Council of Ministers is currently considering the latest draft of the Acid Law.

Commenting on the sentence, Ou Virak, President of the Cambodian Center for Human Rights, a non-aligned, independent, non-governmental organization that works to promote and protect democracy and respect for human rights throughout Cambodia, said:

“It is deeply concerning that courts are issuing probationary sentences for acid attacks and this instance demonstrates a worrying lack of a proper application of the law in force. Probationary sentences mean that the victims are vulnerable to the original perpetrators of the crime and are discouraged from reporting these heinous acts. The administering of justice in this manner may have the effect of further undermining the confidence of acid victims in seeking legal remedies. It is important that sentencing recognizes that the effects of acid attacks go far beyond mere ‘assault’: the repercussions are felt in all aspects of life and can last indefinitely both physically and psychologically. In order for the new Acid Law to be effective in addressing the problems of acid violence, it is important that it is open to meaningful consultation with civil society and relevant experts.”

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