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Cambodian Center for Human Rights

CCHR MEDIA COMMENT – Phnom Penh, 19 December 2012

CCHR expresses its concerns regarding journalists' safety and press freedom in Cambodia

According to a Radio Free Asia (“RFA”) report dated 9 December 2012 (“One reporter arrested after reporting about forest crime”), a journalist has been arrested according to an order from the prosecutor of Kratie Court. Another report from RFA dated 11 December 2012, wrote that another journalist was found unconscious after what the police described as a traffic accident. The circumstances of the arrest, and the traffic accident, are a cause of grave concern.

Mr. Tang Try, a local journalist working for the *New Decade Newspaper* and a member of *Khmer Democratic Journalist Association* was arrested pursuant to an order from the Kratie Court Prosecutor on a charge of Extortion. According to RFA, on 9 December 2012, Mr. Tang Try reported details of illegal logging being carried out by a powerful local resident to the police. After reporting the crime, Mr. Tang Try was arrested and he remains in prison while his colleagues are attempting to find a lawyer to represent him.

Only one day later, on 10 December 2012, Mr. Vichey Anon, an RFA journalist who reported Mr. Tang Try’s arrest, was found unconscious on the road connecting Kratie and Stung Treng provinces. The circumstances of the traffic accident have not been established as Mr. Vichey Anon remains in a coma.

Responding to these incidents, Ramana Sorn, Project Coordinator of CCHR’s Cambodian Freedom of Expression Project, stated:

“These incidents are of grave concern to me and I would like to know more details about both of them. I would therefore like to call for a full and proper investigation into both incidents. I would also like to take the opportunity to gently remind the government and the authorities about the case of Mr. Hang Serei Oudom, a journalist who was murdered in early September 2012, in which there remains no lead. I think that journalists should receive more protection from the government as they are the main source of information for the people. If their freedom is suppressed, then how can they do their job properly?”

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Notes to Editor:

CCHR, founded in November 2002, is a non-aligned, independent, non-governmental organization that works to promote and protect democracy and respect for human rights – primarily civil and political rights – throughout Cambodia.

CCHR is a member of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), the global network for freedom of expression.

The Cambodian Human Rights Portal www.sithi.org is the 2011 winner of the Information Society Innovation Fund Award in the category of Rights and Freedoms.