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Cambodian Center for Human Rights

CCHR MEDIA COMMENT – Phnom Penh, 25 December 2012

Recent acid attack demonstrates lack of progress on the implementation of Acid Law

According to a 24 December 2012 article in the Phnom Penh Post Newspaper (“Acid death may test law”) a woman died after being the victim of a cruel acid attack in Sihanoukville. The victim, Kruy Aing Chheng, was a 20-year-old card dealer in a casino in Sihanoukville. She was attacked on the night of 21 December 2012, during which acid was poured on her head and into her mouth. She died from her injuries after being brought to a hospital in Phnom Penh. Her boyfriend, who is wanted for questioning by the authorities, has since then fled.

According to data collected by the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”), this is the sixth attack of 2012 and the second case in which the victim has died due to their injuries. Another case in Kampong Cham province also left one victim dead and another seriously injured. None of the six cases monitored by CCHR has been brought to court, despite the existence of the Law on the Regulation of Concentrate Acid (the “Acid Law”), which was adopted in early December 2011. This recent case shows that one year later, there is still much progress to be made to implement the law and to ensure that acid violence is brought to a halt in Cambodia.

Responding to the recent attack, CCHR Project Coordinator Ramana Sorn comments:

“The authorities at all levels must ensure that the perpetrator of this acid attack is arrested and brought to justice. Furthermore, more action must be taken by the Royal Government of Cambodia to ensure that the Acid Law, which was passed a year ago this month, to ensure that it is used to prosecute perpetrators of acid violence. While we are encouraged that the government has taken a step forward in adopting the Acid Law, we are concerned that the law is not being implemented. Moreover, the Acid Law must be supplemented with a sub-decree to clarify the provisions of the Acid Law so victims and their families are guaranteed access to medical treatment and legal support.”

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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.