



**មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលសិទ្ធិមនុស្សកម្ពុជា**  
**Cambodian Center for Human Rights**

**CCHR Media Comment, Phnom Penh, 2 January 2013**

**CCHR Applauds Court of Appeal Prosecutor General for Taking Over Bundith Case**

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”) welcomes the decision by the Prosecutor General of the Court of Appeal – reported by *The Cambodia Daily* on 31 December 2012 (‘Appeal Court Takes Over Bundith Case’, p.1) – to appeal against the controversial decision by the Svay Rieng Provincial Court to drop all charges against Chhouk Bundith, the former Bavet governor, on 18 December 2012. Chhouk Bundith is the chief suspect in the shooting of three unarmed female garment factory workers – left seriously injured – who had been protesting outside a factory owned by Kaoway Sports Limited in Bavet City on 20 February 2012. In its Press Release dated 19 December 2012 ([‘CCHR calls for Puma to pull out of Bandith country’](#)), CCHR slammed the decision to drop the charges and called for Puma, the factory’s main buyer, to pull of Cambodia in protest at the impunity.

The Prosecutor General, Ouk Savuth, said that he was “*taking Mr Bundith’s case for sentencing at our Appeal Court in order to find justice for the three victims*”. It is to be hoped that the Court of Appeal will take a genuine and impartial look at the available evidence, assign eye witnesses equal credibility, ignore any political pressure or interference, and observe the fair trial rights of all involved. While it is important to emphasize that Chhouk Bundith is innocent until proven guilty, there is however such compelling evidence to suggest that he may be guilty that a full and proper hearing is certainly warranted. In complete contrast to this step in the right direction, today, 2 January 2013, *The Cambodia Daily* reports that, at the instigation of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior will write a report on the involvement of another suspect, Sar Chantha (‘Ministry of Interior Requested to Further Investigate SEZ Shooting’, p. 18), who was charged in August 2012 with causing unintentional injuries during the shooting but who denies any involvement in the incident.

**CCHR President Ou Virak commented:**

*“The Prosecutor General is the one person in this case who has apparently seen reason. He is aware of the evidence against Chhouk Bundith, has noticed what a laughing stock the Cambodian judiciary is becoming, and has decided to grab the ball and try to score a consolation goal for justice. I hope what we are seeing here is in fact real judicial independence rather than yet another government stitch-up, backing down in the face of the incredulity and outrage at the provincial court’s decision. Regardless, I am happy that there is positive and responsible movement within the judiciary, that the case is finally moving in the right direction. We shall be monitoring the case and any hearing very closely.”*

For more information, please contact Ou Virak via telephone at +855 (0) 1240 4051 or e-mail at [ouvirak@cchrcambodia.org](mailto:ouvirak@cchrcambodia.org) or Senior Consultant Robert Finch via telephone at +855 (0) 7880 9960 or e-mail at [robert.finch@cchrcambodia.org](mailto:robert.finch@cchrcambodia.org).

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](http://www.sithi.org) is the 2011 winner of the Information Society Innovation Fund Award in the category of Rights and Freedoms.