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CCHR’s #NeverForget Exhibition of Impunity Cases to commemorate the International Day to End Impunity

In late 2013, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2 November as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, and urged all UN members states to implement specific measures countering the existing culture of impunity. On the occasion of its 4th anniversary (tomorrow, 2 November), the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”) will launch an exhibition program, highlighting the issue of impunity in Cambodia titled “Never Forget”. This is our fifth time in contributing to call for an end to impunity. The exhibition program will officially start on 23 November 2017, a date which used to be, prior to 2013, the international day to end impunity commemorated annually by freedom of expression advocates. CCHR will hold an online and a public exhibition of key cases illustrating the regrettably widespread lack of accountability and investigations in serious cases of human rights violations.

CCHR wishes to draw attention to the many activists, journalists, and protestors who have been killed or otherwise harmed and who have yet to receive justice. The “Never Forget” program serves as a reminder to both the government and the general public, not to forget Cambodia’s many victims of impunity and their families, who continue to struggle in the pursuit of realizing their right to justice, as guaranteed under domestic and international law. Realization of human rights in Cambodia will not be possible until the perpetrators of serious abuses are brought to justice. The lack of accountability for the killing of journalists, human rights defenders or other critics, promotes fear, self-censorship, denies the public’s right to information, and diminishes confidence in the rule of law.

The right to life is enshrined in the Cambodian Constitution and international human rights law, and states must take concrete steps protect that right. The latest resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council in relation to Cambodia called on the authorities to urgently investigate and prosecute all those who have perpetrated serious crimes, following a fully independent judicial process. The United Nations Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extralegal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions explicitly emphasize that states must launch a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation of all suspected cases of extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions. Furthermore, the UN’s Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death also provides for a transparent investigative process, which must be opened to the scrutiny of the victims’ families and of the general public. Where there is no publicly available information about the existence of an investigation, where the main suspects are not interrogated or arrested, where individuals are convicted but immediately released, impunity kicks in.

CCHR’s exhibition program will open with a daily online release of individual profiles starting on 2 November 2017. 22 key profiles of victims have selected to illustrate the widespread and systematic
nature of impunity in Cambodia. Everyone is encouraged to share the profiles, or to put a post of our Facebook page (Cambodian Center for Human Rights), using the hashtag #NeverForget. The program will end with a three-day photo exhibition, which will be open to the public from Thursday 23 to Saturday 25 November 2017. An "Impunity wall" containing the key profiles, as well as a remembrance book, will be presented during the exhibition. More details about the location and times will follow.

For more information, please contact info@cchrcambodia.org, with “Never Forget” as the subject line.

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Notes to the Editor:

CCHR is a non-aligned, independent, non-governmental organization that works to promote and protect democracy and respect for human rights throughout Cambodia.

CCHR is a member of International Freedom of Expression Exchanges (IFEX), the global network for freedom of expression. CCHR is also a member of the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) SOS-Torture Network, Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA), and OECD Watch.

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 and the 2013 winner of the Communication for Social Change Award, awarded by the Centre of Communication and Social Change at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia.