The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”), the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (“ADHOC”), and the Solidarity Center (“SC”), are pleased to announce the release of the Third Annual Report of the Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitor, produced by the Fundamental Freedoms Monitoring Project (“FFMP”). The report provides a comprehensive overview of the exercise of freedom of association, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly in the Kingdom of Cambodia during the third year of monitoring, from 01 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 (Year Three). The third annual report is available for download now in Khmer and English.

The first annual report of the FFMP, which was published in August 2017 is available in Khmer and English. The second annual report published in September 2018 is also available in Khmer and English.

The aim of the FFMP is to provide an objective overview of the current state of fundamental freedoms in Cambodia by identifying trends related to the legal environment and the exercise of fundamental freedoms. To achieve this aim, the FFMP systematically and objectively assesses whether, and to what extent, the freedoms of association, assembly and expression are guaranteed and can be exercised in Cambodia, by tracking four key milestones (“KM”): KM1 - Does the legal framework for fundamental freedoms meet international standards?; KM2 - Is the legal framework for fundamental freedoms implemented and properly enforced?; KM3 - Do individuals understand fundamental freedoms, and feel free to exercise them?; and, KM4: Are civil society organizations (“CSOs”) and trade unions (“TUs”) recognized by, and able to work in partnership with, the Royal Government of Cambodia?

From 01 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, the FFMP received a total of 167 Incident Reports; polled 992 members of the public across 22 provinces; surveyed 202 CSO and TU leaders; and analyzed 658 relevant incidents via media monitoring.

The third annual report of the Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitor reveals that the space to exercise fundamental freedoms continues to be restricted. Key developments highlighted in the report include: (a) new legislative amendments have further curtailed fundamental freedoms; (b) laws
governing the exercise of fundamental freedoms continue to be implemented in an arbitrary manner; and (c) there has been a further decrease in the public’s ability to exercise fundamental freedoms.

The third annual report reveals that although high percentages of the Cambodian public still display a low confidence in seeking redress for human rights violations and perceive that accessing government authorities or courts to complain is difficult, there seems to nevertheless be a slight encouraging improvement in the level of confidence in redress for human rights violations and perceived accessibility of complaints mechanisms in Year Three compared to Year Two. It is hoped that the Royal Government of Cambodia can continue and strengthen its efforts to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of redress mechanisms.

The FFMP provides a unique insight into the state of fundamental freedoms in Cambodia. It is hoped that the trends identified in this report will lead to better-informed, more constructive discussions to design new strategies to improve the legal environment for civil society and civic freedoms.

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