

Open Letter

To Mark the Tenth Anniversary of the Murder of Chut Wutty

26 April 2022

Today marks 10 years since Chut Wutty was shot dead in Koh Kong province on 26 April 2012. Wutty was the director of the Natural Resource Protection Group (NRPG) which trained, educated and strengthened the capacity of grassroots community members to understand and implement their rights and roles to protect Cambodia's forests and natural resources. Wutty was shot dead while accompanying two journalists who were investigating a forestry crime near a protected area in Koh Kong province, where Wutty had repeatedly attempted to expose illegal logging involving military officials in connection to the building of hydropower dams.

On the tenth anniversary of his murder, we the undersigned civil society groups, non-governmental organisations, activists and grassroots communities reiterate the call for relevant institutions including the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of National Defense and Koh Kong provincial authorities to undertake a credible and thorough investigation to hold all those responsible for his murder to account. In particular, we call for:

- The Cambodian government to create an independent commission to transparently, impartially, and promptly investigate the case.
- The Ministry of Justice to push for the prosecution to investigate the case and bring all those responsible to account before a court of law.
- The Ministry of Interior to ensure that the judicial police officers under its supervision conduct a prompt and independent investigation into the case.
- The Ministry of National Defense to impartially investigate the murder, including the use of weapons without authorisation by any soldier or military police in the incident that led to the killing of environmental activist and civilian, Chut Wutty, as well as the military's suspected involvement in illegal logging.
- The Cambodian government to stop restricting fundamental rights and freedoms and to stop intimidating and judicially harassing grassroots communities and environmental youth and activists simply because of their work to protect Cambodia's forests and natural resources.

We reiterate our calls and urge the Cambodian government and above-mentioned institutions to conduct an immediate and independent investigation into the shooting of environmental activist Chut Wutty and to bring all those responsible for his murder to justice. We call for the Cambodian government to refrain from arbitrarily closing the space for civil society, environmental youth and activists and grassroots communities to protect Cambodia's shrinking forests and natural resources.

For more information, please contact:

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This open letter is endorsed by:

1. Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)
2. Cambodian Food and Service Workers' Federation (CFSWF)
3. Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
4. Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO)
5. Cambodian Youth Network (CYN)
6. Coalition of Cambodian Farmers Community Association (CCFC)
7. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
8. Khmer Student Intelligent League Association (KSILA)
9. 197 Land Community (Koh Kong)
10. Areng Indigenous Community (Koh Kong)
11. Chak Krey land Community (Banteay Meanchey)
12. Community to Protect Nature (Pursat)
13. Klaing Toek 78 Community (Siemreap)
14. Kouy Indigenous Community (Preah Vihear)
15. Mean Chey land Community (Svay Rieng)
16. Ou Chamsrey Tradakpong Community (Kampong Thom)
17. Ou Vor Preng Community (Battambang)
18. Peam Ros Community (Kampong Speu)
19. Phnom Krom Community (Siemreap)
20. Phum Sela Khmer Land Community (Banteay Meanchey)
21. Prey Chher Pech Changvar Laor Chhert Community (Kampong Chhnang)
22. Prey Lang Community (Kampong Thom)
23. Prey Peay Land Community (Kampot)
24. Samaki Chek Meas Community (Svay Rieng)
25. Sre Ampel Water Fall Tourism Forestry Community (Kampong Chhnang)
26. Sre Prang Community (Tboung Khmum)
27. Steung Khsach Sor Forestry Resource (Kampong Chhnang)
28. Ta Noun Land Community (Koh Kong)