PRESS RELEASE - Phnom Penh, 27 April 2022

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights launches a campaign to mark World Press Freedom Day

Every year since 1993, World Press Freedom Day ("WPFD") is celebrated on 3 May. The theme of World Press Freedom Day 2022 is " Journalism under Digital Siege." This important day of the human rights calendar is an opportunity to promote press freedom - a key component of the fundamental right to freedom of expression - to encourage discussions on the state of press freedom around the globe, to shed light on its importance in promoting good governance and democracy, and to remind governments of their obligation to protect and promote press freedom.

World Press Freedom Day is the occasion to spotlight the crucial role that the media plays in delivering accurate and reliable information to the public, to celebrate journalists for their daily efforts in fulfilling their essential mission, and to show support for those who work in hostile environments and under increased government surveillance. Further, it is a day of remembrance for all the journalists who have lost their lives in pursuit of a story and a reminder that many of them across the globe put their lives on the line daily to uncover the truth and expose wrongdoing.

In Cambodia, independent media are the primary targets of the Royal Government of Cambodia's ("RGC") relentless witch hunt against critical voices. CCHR's recent findings show that press freedom has taken a hard blow in the past few years. Journalists operating in the Kingdom are regularly intimidated, surveilled, threatened, and judicially harassed for conducting their legitimate work. From 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021, CCHR recorded that at least nine journalists faced legal harassment ranging from threats and court summonses to arbitrary arrests and politically motivated convictions, and seven media licenses were revoked by the Ministry of Information. In addition, journalists faced various obstacles in accessing information held by the Cambodian authorities. Furthermore, justice has yet to be served for most of the journalists killed in Cambodia in the last decade.

In this context, it remains vital to raise public awareness of the role and challenges of journalists and to advocate for the respect, promotion and fulfillment of the right to press freedom by the RGC.

To do so, CCHR will conduct a series of activities under its Word Press Freedom Day campaign 2022, as outlined below:

- On 28-29 April 2022, CCHR will release two infographics outlining two cases of journalists who have been judicially harassed for conducting their legitimate reporting work to highlight the challenges faced by journalists in Cambodia;
- From 30 April to 2 May 2022, CCHR will release the videos of the winners of its short video competition on freedom of expression held in March 2022;
• On 2 May 2022, CCHR will host a radio talk show on World Press Freedom Day and release a joint statement with NGO partners to call on the RGC to improve respect for press freedom in Cambodia;
• On 3 May 2022, CCHR will hold an event at its office, which will include an award ceremony for the winners of its short video competition and the launch of its new modules on press freedom and access to information; and
• On 4-5 May 2022, CCHR will release an infographic, an animated video, and a rap song on press freedom and access to information.

For more information, please contact CCHR’s Promoting and Protecting Freedom of Expression and Independent Media Project Coordinator, Mr. Houn Phorn, via email at phorn@cchrcambodia.org or via phone at 070757884.

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Notes to the Editor:

Founded in November 2002, CCHR 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 in Cambodia.

CCHR is a member of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), the global network for freedom of expression, and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. CCHR is also a member of the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) SOS-Torture Network 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 for Communication and Social Change at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia.