CCHR Fundamental Freedoms Alert – Phnom Penh, 16 August 2022
Nine Journalists and Activists Arrested in Takeo Province’s Phnom Tamao area

Date of the incident: 16 August 2022
Category of HRD: Journalists and Activists
Location: Takeo Province

On 16 August 2022, five journalists working for Voice of Democracy (VOD) and four activists from the Khmer Thavrak youth group were arrested in Phnom Tamao at around 12pm while they were taking pictures and gathering information in the area. The four activists from Khmer Thavrak are Hun Vannak, Chhoeurn Daravy, Chaem Srey Kea and Sokun Tola. According to the latest information received, all nine individuals were brought to the Bati district police station for questioning and all of them were released around 18:30.

In the evening of 15 August 2022, Chhoeurn Daravy made a Facebook post calling on the public to join her and her team the next day to submit a petition to Takeo’s provincial Department of Environment and Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery. The petition asked authorities to provide information on the installation of poles in an area that has recently been cleared around Phnom Tamao. The Khmer Thavrak activists were arrested before they could submit the petition.

From 29 July to 7 August 2022, about 600 hectares of forest land around Phnom Tamao were cleared after the area was granted to development companies to build a satellite city. The land clearing came to a halt on 7 August 2022, when Prime Minister Hun Sen rescinded the permission to develop the land after criticism from the public.

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