PRESS RELEASE - Phnom Penh, 23 November 2022
CCHR releases its new annual report on the state of freedom of expression, press freedom and access to information in Cambodia

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”), is pleased to announce the release of its annual report on the state of freedom of expression, press freedom, and access to information in Cambodia, produced by the Advancing Rights in Cambodia (“ARC”) Project and the Promoting and Protecting Freedom of Expression and Independent Media in Cambodia (“FoEx”) Project. This report is available for download in Khmer and English.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the state of the rights to freedom of expression, press freedom, and access to information in Cambodia and the ability of the public to exercise these rights from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022. It contains key data showing that during this period 4 media licenses were revoked by the Royal Government of Cambodia (“RGC”), numerous journalists and human rights defenders (“HRDs”) faced intimidation and judicial harassment, journalists and citizens faced many obstacles when attempting to access to information, and self-censorship continued to rise. This data is complemented by testimonies of journalists and HRDs on the challenges they continue to face in exercising their legitimate work in an increasingly dangerous environment.

The report also demonstrates a lack of compliance of domestic law with international law and standards, enabling the RGC to curtail and illegitimately restrict the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, press freedom, and access to information by journalists, HRDs, and citizens.

Recommendations

Against this backdrop, the report provides various recommendations to the RGC to take concrete measures to comply with its international human rights obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill freedom of expression in Cambodia. CCHR’s recommendations to the authorities include, but are not limited to:

- Discarding or amending problematic laws such as the NIG Sub-Decree, the lèse-majesté offense, or the State of Emergency law to ensure that the rights to freedom of expression, press freedom and to access information are protected in Cambodia;
- Releasing, dropping charges against and ceasing all judicial harassment against journalist and HRDs so they can carry out their legitimate activities without fear or obstruction;
- Putting an end to impunity for crime committed against journalists and HRDs by conducting thorough and independent investigations, and bring the perpetrators to justice; or
- Ensuring that all government departments, public bodies, and private bodies with public functions adhere to the principle of maximum disclosure and approve requests for information disclosure, particularly from journalists, from government-held records to enable information of importance to
the public interest to circulate freely in the country and increase transparency and accountability of the RGC’s actions.

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