



**មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលសិទ្ធិមនុស្សកម្ពុជា**  
Cambodian Center for Human Rights

**CCHR Fundamental Freedoms Alert – Phnom Penh, 3 September 2020**

**Three environmental activist arrested**

**Date of the incident:** 3 September 2020  
**Category of HRD:** Environmental activists  
**Location:** Phnom Penh  
**Nature of threat:** Freedom of Expression

Today, on 3 September 2020, Mr. Thun Ratha, environmental activist and member of Mother Nature Cambodia<sup>1</sup> was arrested from a property he is renting in Khan Pur Sentchey, Phnom Penh. Many authorities (approximately 25 guards and police) surrounded the property for approximately two hours before arresting him and taking him away at 12.40pm. Human rights monitors were blocked by authorities and not permitted to enter the area near by as police undertook the arrest. Authorities padlocked the property shut and left a letter displayed on the door informing that the operation was led by the Deputy Chief of the Phnom Penh Municipal Police, in cooperation with the Deputy Director of the Information Department, the Deputy Prosecutor, and relevant authorities. The letter states that the actions were taken on the grounds that Ratha “*published the information without legal permission*”. It is not yet known what information was published or what the legal grounds are for requiring permission over the publication.

A second Mother Nature Cambodia activist, Ms. Long Kunthea, has also been arrested today. She reported being followed by authorities while walking from Wat Phnom to Prime Minister Hun Sen’s house this morning. She had intended to request a meeting with the Prime Minister to share her concerns over a number of environmental issues, including the development of Bueng Ta-mouk, one of the last remaining lakes in Phnom Penh, which will destroy the habitat of many bird species and damage biodiversity, and is also expected to cause significant flooding in Phnom Penh.

A third Mother Nature Cambodia activist, Ms. Phoun Keo Reaksmey, who was with Ms. Long Kunthea this morning, has been arrested today, however, the justification behind her arrest is not known. There are reports suspecting that Kunthea and Reaksmey were detained for questioning at Khan Chbar Ampov police station and moved by police at around 6pm to another unknown location.

The arrest of three people has been confirmed by a Phnom Penh Police spokesperson.

**For more information, please contact CCHR’s Advocacy Director, Mr. Suon Yuthyia via telephone at +855 (0) 88 81 42 783 , or by email at [yuthyia@cchrcambodia.org](mailto:yuthyia@cchrcambodia.org)**

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<sup>1</sup> Mother Nature Cambodia was de-registered in September 2017, citing judicial harassment of its members, but continue their environmental activism as a movement of concerned citizens.