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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 Sustaining Independent Media and Fundamental Freedoms 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 them from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023. It contains key data showing that these rights were further restricted ahead of the 23 July 2023 general election: five media licenses were revoked by the Royal Government of Cambodia (“RGC”), numerous journalists and human rights defenders faced legal action and intimidation, access to several news sites was blocked in the lead-up to the polls, and self-censorship continued to rise. This data is complemented by testimonies of journalists and HRDs on the challenges they face in exercising their legitimate work in an increasingly dangerous environment.

The report also demonstrates a lack of compliance of some newly-adopted legal provisions with international law and standards, enabling the RGC to curtail and illegitimately restrict the exercise of the right to freedom of expression by citizens, journalists, and human rights defenders. Against this backdrop, the report provides various recommendations to the RGC to take concrete measures to fulfill its international human rights obligations of protecting and promoting freedom of expression in Cambodia.

About the ARC and FoEx Projects:

In order to address the curtailment of freedom expression, press freedom, and access to information, the ARC and FoEx Projects seeks to inform positive legislative developments to bring domestic law in-line with international human rights standards. The Projects also seek to, encourage media pluralism and diversity by permitting independent media outlets to investigate and report on all issues of public importance without fear of government repercussions, and to ensure that all government departments and private with public function to adhere to the principle of maximum disclosure of information.

For more information, please contact CCHR’s Sustaining Independent Media and Fundamental Freedoms in Cambodia 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.