CCHR's PRESS RELEASE

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights ("CCHR") Releases its Annual Fair Trial Rights Report, Outlining Key Findings from its Monitoring of Four Courts of Appeal in 2025

Phnom Penh, 08 October 2026

Today, CCHR's Fair Trial Rights Project releases its Annual Report "Fair Trial Rights in Cambodia: Monitoring Report 2025", covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2025. The Report analyzes data gathered by CCHR through the daily monitoring of 422 randomly selected criminal cases involving 573 defendants at the Courts of Appeal of Phnom Penh, Battambang, Tboung Khmum, and Preah Sihanouk. CCHR's Trial Monitors use a customized trial-monitoring checklist to assess 14 key fair trial rights and determine the extent to which national and international fair trial rights standards are being upheld by the four Courts.

The Report finds that all four Appeal Courts upheld **six** fair trial rights in 2025, the highest number recorded since CCHR began monitoring all four Courts in 2022, and an increase from three rights in 2024. These rights were the pre-trial right to speak with a lawyer and to have adequate time and facilities to prepare a defense, the right to a public judgement, the right to understand the nature and cause of the charges, the right to be present at trial, the right to be tried without undue delay, and the professionalism of judges. Similarly, it is encouraging that none of the Appeal Courts regressed on rights they had previously upheld.

Regrettably, three fair trial rights were not upheld by any of the four Appeal Courts in 2025: the right to legal representation, the right to liberty, and evidentiary rights. The right to a reasoned judgement was not upheld by the Phnom Penh Appeal Court, while the other three Appeal Courts did not have sufficient data for this right to be assessed. There was a regression regarding the right to liberty in all four Courts, with the overall rate of detention increasing from 2024, meaning that roughly six out of every seven defendants were subject to this measure. Regarding evidentiary rights, neither forensic nor medical evidence was presented in any of the 422 trials monitored in 2025. A lack of varied forms of evidence can undermine the thoroughness and integrity of judicial proceedings. 93% of all trials monitored lasted one hour or less, while only 7% lasted more than one hour.

The **Phnom Penh Appeal Court** demonstrated promising year-on-year progress, upholding eight key fair trial rights, up from seven in 2024. Notably, it newly upheld the right to be tried without undue delay, with 86% of trials taking place within six months of the appeal being filed. The **Tboung Khmum Appeal Court** also demonstrated an encouraging performance, upholding nine key fair trial rights. It newly upheld the right to the presumption of innocence and the right to a public judgment. It is notable that in 2023, the Phnom Penh and Tboung Khmum Appeal Courts each upheld just four fair trial rights, indicating year-on-year progress.

The **Battambang Appeal Court** also demonstrated progress, upholding eight fair trial rights, up from five in 2024. It newly upheld the right to be present at trial, the professionalism of judges and prosecutors, and the right not to be compelled to confess guilt or testify against oneself. The **Preah Sihanouk Appeal**

Court also upheld seven fair trial rights, up from six the previous year. For the second year in a row, there was insufficient data to assess the right of children in conflict with the law, with CCHR's Trial Monitors observing only nine juvenile defendants in 2025.

CCHR hopes that the data, analysis, and recommendations set out in this Report will be used by the Cambodian government as part of its efforts to improve the judicial system, in particular to strengthen adherence to fair trial standards, given that the right to a fair trial lies at the bedrock of any judicial system that delivers meaningful justice for all.

Mr. SENG Sovathana, CCHR's Executive Director, comments:

"CCHR's team was pleased to meet with representatives from the Courts of Appeal and the General Prosecutors attached to the target Courts, who have been cooperating with CCHR since 2022. The findings from 2025 indicate notable progress, and we commend the courts for their continued efforts to strengthen the justice system. However, some findings still require improvement and further attention to ensure that fair trial rights are fully upheld in line with applicable standards. In particular, further progress is needed regarding the rights to liberty, legal representation, a reasoned judgement, and evidentiary rights".

The Report is available in both Khmer and English, and the raw data are available on CCHR's Fair Trial Rights Monitoring Database.

For more information, please contact CCHR's Fair Trial Rights Project Coordinator, Mr. Hun Seang Hak via e-mail at seanghak.hun@cchrcambodia.org or telephone at +855 (0) 12 40 30 50.

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Notes to the Editor:

About the Fair Trial Rights Monitoring Project

CCHR's Fair Trial Rights Monitoring Project was set up in 2009 to monitor criminal trials in Cambodian courts, and to assess their adherence to international and Cambodian fair trial standards. The Project uses its findings to promote increased respect for fair trial rights, advocate for improvements in court practices, and increase public understanding and knowledge of fair trial rights. The overall goal of the Project is to improve court procedures and practices in Cambodia, contributing to full adherence to fair trial standards in criminal trials and greater public understanding of fair trial rights. For more information, please visit our website and Fair Trial Rights Monitoring Database.

About the Cambodian Center for Human Rights

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) won the 2011 Information Society Innovation Fund Award in the category of Rights and Freedoms, and the 2013 Communication for Social Change Award, awarded by the Centre for Communication and Social Change at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia.