



Phnom Penh, April 11, 2020

The Cambodian Journalists Alliance (CamboJA), a membership network of Cambodian journalists, and the Overseas Press Club of Cambodia (OPCC), an organization that represents foreign correspondents and journalists working in Cambodia, together wish to express their concern regarding the recent arrest of Sovann Rithy.

Rithy, the director of TVFB news website, was arrested on April 7 after directly quoting statements from Prime Minister Hun Sen. These statements were made during a press conference before an audience of government officials and journalists, and were also broadcast on the Prime Minister's personal Facebook page. Following his arrest Rithy was charged under Articles 494 and 495 of the Criminal Code for 'incitement to commit a felony'.

CamboJA and the OPCC request that the government release Rithy and drop the charges against him. CamboJA and the OPCC believe the act of quoting the Prime Minister should not be considered as a crime.

Furthermore, in response to the announcement on April 9 of country-wide travel restrictions meant to limit the spread of Covid-19, CamboJA and OPCC would like to take the opportunity to urge the Cambodian government to ensure that journalists can continue to do their work freely.

Both CamboJA and the OPCC appreciate the government's efforts to contain the virus and to protect the Cambodian people from Covid-19. However, it is also crucial for journalists to continue to be able to do their work, to provide accurate and credible information to the public. We therefore ask the government to lift the travel restrictions for journalists, so that they may be able to move about freely, but responsibly, and to report on the situation in Cambodia.

For further information, please contact:

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