



CamboJA Deeply Concerned About Violence Against Journalists

Phnom Penh, September 30, 2020 – Cambodian Journalists Alliance (CamboJA) condemns the beating and threats made against four journalists by a group of armed men on the night of September 28 in Tbong Khmum province.

At 12:30am on September 28 near the border of Memot district, four online news journalists were attacked as they were sleeping in two private cars while traveling from Kratie province to Phnom Penh. The assault was carried out by a group of five to seven men, suspected to be timber traders, armed with knives, axes and large sticks. Ren Samnang of PMN News, received a serious rib injury in the attack, while Chakrapop news reporter Muok Saren was slightly injured.

This is not the first time that journalists playing an important role in reporting on forestry crimes and other offenses have been threatened and beaten.

From July 1 to September 30, CamboJA has recorded 15 cases of persecution against journalists, including violence, arrests, and court complaints, in eight provinces including Kandal, Takeo, Kampong Chhnang, Sihanoukville, Monduliri, Siem Reap, Kratie and Phnom Penh.

In another recent case, Kuy Piseth, 24, a reporter for CBN TV Online, died in Phnom Penh in the early hours of September 29 in what police say was a traffic accident. His body was found by local authorities on a concrete road in Prey Tea village, Choam Chao 3 commune, Por Senchey district, 40 meters from his motorbike. Mr. Kuy Piseth had left his workplace at 11:30 on September 28, according to Mr. Chhay Soheat, Director General of CBN. Immediately after finding his body and without conducting a thorough investigation, the authorities concluded that his death was the result of a motorbike crash that Piseth had caused, according to Mr. Theng Kosal, Choam Chao III commune chief.

Nop Vy, executive director at CamboJA said: “While the government and other stakeholders are focusing on the fight against Covid-19, the perpetrators have taken this lack of oversight as an opportunity to create chaos in society by committing crimes, including murder, without fear of legal repercussions. They consider journalists who dare to report the crimes they are committing to be enemies and have threatened to sue and kill them without fear of reprisal. Authorities must take action to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice and that their families also receive justice.”

CamboJA, which has about 100 members and board members, calls on the Royal Government to ensure the safety and security of all journalists so that they can exercise their right to freely report without fear on crimes that are taking place in Cambodian society.

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