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Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association

Statement: CamboJA urges respect for journalists’ right to access information on the Covid-19 vaccine

Phnom Penh, March 04, 2021 – The Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA) urges the Royal Government to guarantee access to information for all journalists, without discrimination, so that they can seek, receive and disseminate information on the Covid-19 vaccine.

On the morning of March 4, Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, prime minister of the kingdom of Cambodia, and his wife, as well as several other senior government officials, went to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine at Calmette Hospital in Phnom Penh and held a press conference on Cambodia’s vaccination campaign.

Journalists from Voice of America (VOA), Reuters, the AP, VOD, the Cambonomist, Thmey Thmey, and CamboJA News were not to allow to photograph or report on the event and were blocked from accessing it altogether. Only reporters from state media and pro-government media outlets including Fresh News, Cambodian National Television (TVK), Bayon TV, and CNC TV were permitted access. This undermines journalists’ rights to information, as stated in Article 41 of the Constitution and Article 5 of the Press Law, and highlights inequalities between journalists from independent and pro-government outlets.

Nop Vy, executive director of CamboJA, said: “Each media outlets plays an important role in providing information to readers, listeners and viewers alike, especially as Cambodia begins to receive Covid-19 vaccines. Banning journalists from accessing and reporting on such events affects both citizens’ and journalists’ right to information.”

CamboJA, which has more than 100 journalist members and board members, is actively working with the Royal Government to promote freedom and access to information for the people, especially journalists.

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