

STATEMENT: The court must investigate the alleged attempted rape of TV presenter Mean Pich Rita in a comprehensive and transparent manner

13 May 2021 – We, the undersigned media organizations, associations, and NGOs urge the court to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the complaint filed by My TV presenter Mean Pich Rita accusing Heng Sier, a powerful tycoon, of sexual assault and attempted rape.

On May 11, 2021, Mean Pich Rita, a second-year business student and a presenter at My TV, filed a lawsuit against Heng Sier saying he touched her and attempted to rape her, threatening her with a gun.

According to the complaint sent to the Phnom Penh Municipal Court prosecutor, on May 4, at around 2:00 or 3:00 pm, Heng Sier called Mean Pich Rita saying that he wanted to meet and give her items such as rice, fish sauce, and so on to distribute as gifts to people affected by COVID-19. He asked her to wait near the Kilo 4 Market near Asia Europe University. Once he arrived, the complaint says, he forced her into the car and began driving away.

In her complaint, Mean Pich Rita said that after she got into the car Heng Sier said obscene words to her and touched her thighs and genitals with his hands and said he wanted to take her to a guesthouse and have sex with him. When she refused and tried to leave the car, Heng Sier threatened her saying that he had a gun. After hearing this, she panicked and moved to the back seat of the car. The tycoon then stopped the car and tried to grab her, at which point she opened the car door and ran out.

The account contradicts that of Heng Sier who last week filed a complaint alleging she had stolen his mobile phone and injured him. On May 8 Mean Pich Rita was arrested and detained for two days, after which the Phnom Penh municipal court charged her with aggravated theft.

In the security camera footage released by some local media outlets, we see that there are a number of irregularities that require a thorough and transparent investigation to ensure that victims are not harmed and that justice is truly given.

At the same time, we also call on journalists as well as all media outlets to report professionally, and avoid making statements that could cause harm to either party without a source or strong evidence.

Signed,

Building Community Voices (BCV)

Cambodian Female Journalists (CFJ)

Cambodian Journalists Alliance (CamboJA)