



## **STATEMENT: Journalists' Access to Red Zones in Cambodia**

06 May 2021 – We, the undersigned journalism and media organizations, call on the Ministry of Information to restore the rights of journalists to safely access Phnom Penh's red zones.

A number of independent journalists have demonstrated they are prepared to take the risks and necessary precautions seriously in order to enter the red zones in a way that keeps themselves and the public safe. Their ability to move freely into these areas is essential to their work of keeping the public informed.

The recent revocation of journalists' access to red zones, however, has restricted the rights of the press to report freely and fairly.

In addition to restrictions on red zone access, the decision to only provide orange zone access to journalists who have been specifically authorized by the government limits the flow of information at a time when a well-informed public and government held accountable are key to bringing the current Covid-19 outbreak under control. Therefore, all journalists who adhere to health precautions, professional principles and ethical standards should be allowed to report from red and orange zones.

Furthermore, the restriction undermines the government's commitments to protecting press freedoms and access to information.

Journalists—both those affiliated with media outlets and those who work as freelancers—play a vital role in fighting misinformation and should be given equal access to restricted areas. The public needs more information about the ongoing health crisis—from varied, independent and credible sources—not less.

Therefore, we call on the Ministry of Information to allow independent media outlets and freelance journalists to perform their duties throughout red, orange and yellow zones. Journalists who have a valid press credentials, adhere to strict social distancing measures, wear masks and take necessary precautions must be permitted to continue doing their work.



As journalists, we believe providing accurate, verified and impartial information is an essential public service and we urge the Ministry of Information to allow independent Cambodian and foreign reporters to continue playing this vital role.

Signed,

Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)

Cambodian Journalists Alliance (CamboJA)

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

Overseas Press Club of Cambodia (OPCC)