

Joint Statement: End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, 2 November 2022 — On this International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, we, the undersigned journalists' groups and civil society organizations, call on Cambodian authorities to prosecute crimes committed against journalists, and to stop committing them.

As the nation prepares to welcome foreign heads of state, diplomats and international media to the ASEAN summit this month, we urge authorities to ensure that journalists are free to report and publish news that holds institutions and individuals to account and serves the public interest. We also urge immediate action to ensure that effective, independent and transparent investigations into crimes against journalists are conducted and that justice is served.

Since 1994, at least 15 journalists have been killed in Cambodia. Most were reporting on sensitive issues at the time of their death, and no perpetrators have been brought to justice in these cases.

Harassment and crimes against journalists remain worryingly high this year. According to the Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA), 57 journalists were harassed in the last 10 months alone (January to October 2022). Of these 57 journalists, 23 were subjected to violence and threats, 12 were arrested, 12 faced judicial harassment, six were detained for questioning and four media outlets' licenses were revoked.

The prosecution of two former Radio Free Asia journalists has been pending for five years, violating their right to a speedy trial.

Cambodian and foreign journalists this year experienced well-documented violence, repeated harassment and intimidation by authorities and other actors while covering the ongoing labor strike against NagaWorld casino in Phnom Penh, as well as the clear-cutting and replanting of Phnom Tamao forest. In one incident, [five VOD journalists were unjustly detained](#) and questioned for about seven hours.

Targeting journalists who are reporting in the public interest undermines freedoms of expression and the press, threatens the public's access to information and makes it harder to hold those in power accountable for wrongdoings. In addition, when authorities fail to properly investigate and punish crimes against journalists, it sends the message that such crimes are allowed.

We, the undersigned organizations, condemn the impunity with which crimes against journalists are met in Cambodia. We call on authorities to take concrete action to ensure that effective, independent and transparent investigations into such egregious crimes are conducted, that perpetrators face punishment and that the journalists who have experienced these crimes receive justice. We also call on the Cambodian government to take immediate measures to ensure the safety of all journalists working in the country so they may exercise their freedoms of expression and the press, and serve the public without fear.

The government has long missed the deadline on bringing perpetrators of crimes against journalists to justice. This impunity must end.

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This joint statement is endorsed by:

1. Advocacy and Policy Institute (API)
2. Building Community Voices (BCV)
3. Cambodia Informal Economy Workers Association (CIWA)
4. Cambodia's Association for Protection of Journalists (CAPIJ)
5. Cambodian Alliance of Trade Union (CATU)
6. Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)
7. Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)
8. Cambodian Human Rights Action Coalition (CHRAC)
9. Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
10. Cambodian Institute for Democracy (CID)
11. Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA)
12. The Cambodian NGO Committee on CEDAW (NGO-CEDAW)
13. Cambodian Tourism Workers Union Federation (CTWUF)
14. Cambodian Youth Network (CYN)
15. Cambodian's Independent Civil-Servants Association (CICA)
16. Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)
17. Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD)
18. Coalition of Cambodia Farmers Community (CCFC)
19. Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL)
20. Community Legal Education Center (CLEC)
21. Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)
22. Free and Independent Trade Union Federation (FUPI)
23. Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)
24. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
25. International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)
26. Labour Rights Supported Union Khmer Employee of Naga World (LRSU)
27. Overseas Press Club of Cambodia (OPCC)
28. People Center for Development and Peace (PDP-Center)
29. Solidarity House (SH)
30. Transparency International-Cambodia (TIC)
31. Women's Media Center of Cambodia (WMC)
32. Youth Resource Development Program (YRDPA)