



Joint Statement: VOD, VOA Journalists Denied Access to Hun Sen's Press Conference

Phnom Penh, 14 November 2022 — We, the undersigned journalists' organizations, are calling on the Ministry of Information to clarify why journalists from news outlets VOD and VOA were denied access to a government press conference with Prime Minister Hun Sen on Sunday, November 13, while dozens of other journalists were permitted entry.

Earlier that day, VOD and VOA registered a few of their journalists to cover the post-ASEAN summit press conference at the Peace Palace in Phnom Penh. VOD and VOA were among the first 10 media organizations to register. VOD and VOA journalists also have press identification cards issued by the Ministry of Information.

But at approximately 1:45 p.m. before distributing the passes to registered media, two members of the Ministry of Information's press staff told a VOD journalist that their supervisor would not allow VOD and VOA journalists to attend the press conference with Hun Sen. The journalist requested a reason for the denial of access, but was not provided with one, even after calling a senior ministry official to inquire. VOA journalists went to the summit's media center to request their passes and were rejected.

We call on the ministry to explain this apparent discrimination against journalists from certain news outlets. However, we see no justifiable reason for denying any professional journalists the opportunity to openly access public officials and institutions, and report news in the public interest.

Since the prime minister welcomed questions from the media, we would like to know why journalists from VOD and VOA were not welcome to ask questions.

For more information, please contact:

Chhan Sokunthea, *Media Development Director of Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)*, on Signal at (+855) 78 222 466 or by email at csokunthea@ccimcambodia.org (English and Khmer)

Nop Vy, *Executive Director of Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA)*, on Signal at (+855) 12 519 261 or by email at ed@camboja.net (English and Khmer)

This joint statement is endorsed by:

1. Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)
2. Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA)
3. Overseas Press Club of Cambodia (OPCC)