

His Excellency Sar Kheng,
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Interior

Phnom Penh, 7 February 2022

Open letter from civil society organizations Request for NagaWorld Labor Dispute Resolution and Release and Dismissal Charges against 8 union leaders and activists

We, the undersigned civil society organizations working on the promotion and protection of human rights labor rights, land rights , environmental activists, independent analyst and social researcher in the Kingdom of Cambodia, wish to inform His Excellency of our deep disappointment at the authorities' abuse of the Cambodian legal framework to wrongly arrest, detain and charge eight union leaders and continues to arrest more union activists for their peaceful exercise of freedom of association and freedom of assembly, both of which are protected in domestic and international law.

The charge of incitement to commit a felony levied against the union leaders and activists sends the message to Naga World strikers that their labor rights can be flouted with impunity while they will face legal action merely for calling out their company's labor violations and seeking redress. This could set a dangerous precedent, emboldening employers to ignore inconvenient labor standards, and potentially leading to a roll-back of hard-earned labor rights in Cambodia.

We call for the eight arrested union leaders and activists to be immediately released, and for the charges against them to be unconditionally dropped. We remind the Royal Government of Cambodia ("RGC") that unionism is not a crime, and that fundamental freedoms must be safeguarded, even when they are exercised in pursuit of a cause that the RGC disagrees with. We further call on the RGC to urge Naga World, once the eight union leaders and activists have been released, to enter into genuine negotiations with the Naga World union with the aim of finding a fair and just resolution to their labor dispute.

In addition, the RGC must cease to accuse trade unions and civil society organizations of attempting to overthrow the Government via a "color revolution" every time they use the fundamental freedoms granted to them by the Cambodian Constitution and international human rights instruments ratified by Cambodia to voice their concerns and demand better respect for human rights. It is high time for the RGC to start appreciating the role that civil society plays in protecting human rights and promoting democracy in the Kingdom and to enable a safe environment for its members to operate freely and without fear of repercussion.

Therefore, we, the undersigned civil society organizations working on the promotion and protection of human rights and labor rights in Cambodia, request His Excellency to intervene in order to have the eight jailed union leaders and activists released and all charges against them dropped and to find a just and fair resolution to this labor dispute.

This open letter is signed by:

1. Hun Vannak (Khmer Thavrak)
2. Chhoeun Daravy (Khmer Thavrak)
3. Eng Malai (Khmer Thavrak)
4. Eng Vandy (Khmer Thavrak)
5. Svay Samnang (Khmer Thavrak)
6. Dr. Lao Mong Hay
7. Dr. Seng Sary
8. 197 Land Community (Koh Kong)
9. ActionAid Cambodia (AAC)
10. Andong Trabek Land Community (Svay Rieng)
11. Areng Indigenous Community (Koh Kong)
12. Bos Snor Community (Tbong Khmum)
13. Boeung Pram Community (Battambang)
14. Building and Wood Workers' Trade Union Federation of Cambodia (BWTUC)
15. Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU)
16. Cambodian Food and Service Workers' Federation (CFSWF)
17. Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
18. Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)
19. Cambodian Institute for Democracy (CID)
20. Cambodian Informal Employment Reinforcement Association (CIERA)
21. Cambodia's Independent Civil Servants Association (CICA)
22. Cambodian Informal Economy Workers Association (CIWA-CLC)
23. Cambodian Human Rights Action Coalition (CHRAC)
24. Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO)
25. Cambodian Tourism Workers Union Federation (CTWUF)
26. Cambodian Youth Network (CYN)
27. Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)
28. Chi Kha Kraom Land Community (Koh Kong)
29. Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers' Democratic Union (C.CAWDU)
30. Cambodia Labor Confederation (CLC)
31. Coalition of Cambodian Farmers Community Association (CCFC)
32. Coalition of Free Trade Unions of Women Textile (CFTUWT)
33. Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL)
34. Community Legal Education Center (CLEC)

35. Community to Protect Nature (Pursat)
36. Dak Por Community (Kampong Speu)
37. Equitable Cambodia (EC)
38. Federation of Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC)
39. Free and Independent Trade Union Federation (FUF)
40. Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)
41. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
42. Independent Trade Union Federation (INTUFE)
43. Indigenous Community in Prame Commune (Preah Vihear)
44. Khmer Kampuchea Krom for Human Rights and Development Association (KKKHRDA)
45. Kleang Toek 78 Community (Siemreap)
46. Koh Sralao Fishery Community (Koh Kong)
47. Kouy Indigenous Community (Preah Vihear)
48. Labour Right Supported Union Khmer Employee of Nagaworld (L.R.S.U)
49. Land Community (Pailin)
50. Mean Chey Land Community (Svay Rieng)
51. Ou Chamsrey Tradakpong Community (Kampong Thom)
52. Ou Vor Preng Community (Battambang)
53. Peam Ros Community (Kampong Speu)
54. Phum Sela Khmer Land Community (Banteay Meanchey)
55. Phnom Krom Community (Siemreap)
56. Prek Ksach Land Community (Koh Kong)
57. Prey Lang Community (Kampong Thom)
58. Prey Peay Fishery Community (Kampot)
59. Prey Chher Pech Changvar Laor Chhert Community (Kampong Chhnang)
60. Reaksmei Sameakki Community (Kampong Speu)
61. Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (STT)
62. Samaki Chek Meas Community (Svay Rieng)
63. Samaki Romeas Haek Community (Svay Rieng)
64. Samaki Sangkae Pir Mean Rith (Preah Vihear)
65. Solidarity House (SH)
66. Sre Ampel Water Fall Tourism Forestry Community (Kampong Chhnang)
67. Sre Prang Community (Tboung Khmum)
68. Steung Khsach Sor Forestry Resource (Kampong Chhnang)
69. Ta Noun Land Community (Koh Kong)
70. The Cambodia Confederation of Unions (CCU)
71. The Cambodian NGO Committee on CEDAW (NGO-CEDAW)
72. Thmar Da Community (Pursat)
73. Tonlung Community (Tboung Khmum)
74. Transparency International Cambodia (TI)
75. Workers' Solidarity Strength Independent Union (WSSIU)

76. Youth Resources Development Program (YRDP)
77. Chongkom 1 community (Tboung Khmum)
78. Khnorng Kroper Lech community (Tboung Khmum)
79. Grassroots Farmer Community (Tboung Khmum)
80. Yerng Knhom Community (Tboung Khmum)
81. Chongkom Kandal community (Tboung Khmum)
82. Kompres community (Tboung Khmum)
83. Trapeang Pring Community (Tboung Khmum)
84. Brolos Community (Tboung Khmum)
85. Broma Robrom Community (Kratie)
86. Sombok Community (Kratie)
87. Women network for Trapeang Pring community (Tboung Khmum)
88. Romeas Haek Rural Women Network (Svay Rieng)
89. Women Network for Meanchey Community (Svay Rieng)
90. Dak Por Women Community (Takeo)
91. Chok Chey Women Community (Takeo)
92. Women United for Spean Ches Community (Preah Sihanouk)
93. 843 Women Movement Alliance (Koh Kong)
94. Rural Youth Farmer Alliance (Koh Kong)
95. Preah Vihear Youth Farmer Group (Preah Vihear)
96. Tambae Meanchey Youth Network (Tboung Khmum)
97. Kampong Ampil Conservation Forest Community (Svay Rieng)
98. Sithprosre Community (Prey Veng)
99. Chong Ampil Land Community (Prey Veng)
100. Seang Kveang Community (Prey Veng)
101. Chrey Lerng Farmer Community (Prey Veng)
102. Phom Khnom Community (Kandal)
103. Thmar Thom Andoung Tuek Praek Trabek Community (Preah Sihanouk)
104. Ou Kampuchea Community (Preah Sihanouk)
105. Kbal Hong Tuek Communtiy (Preah Sihanouk)
106. Praek Traeng Community (Preah Sihanouk)
107. Pongrouk Community (Kampot)
108. Veal Veng Community (Kampot)
109. Ang Svay Farmer Community (Kampot)
110. Rural Farmer 129 Land Community (Koh Kong)
111. 843 Land Community (Koh Kong)
112. 766 Land Community (Koh Kong)
113. Nea Pisey Rural Land Community (Koh Kong)
114. Chambak Trang Farmer Community (Kampong Speu)
115. Odom Sre Kpos forest land community (Kompong Speu)
116. Human right promotion land community (Kandal)

117. Trey Sla community (Kandal)
118. Totol community (Kandal)
119. Ompov Prey community (Kandal)
120. Kotarear Community (Takeo)
121. Samaki community (Takeo)
122. Phum Kandal Community (Takeo)
123. Trapeang Krasang Community (Takeo)
124. Kanlaeng Khla Community (Takeo)
125. Sambo Community (Preah Vihear)
126. Russei Srok Community (Preah Vihear)
127. Chouk Chey Community (Preah Vihear)
128. Kalorth Community (Preah Vihear)
129. Ou Romdoul Land Community (Preah Vihear)
130. Phnom Ke Samaki Community (Preah Vihear)
131. Bos Community (Preah Vihear)
132. Tasou Meanrith Community (Preah Vihear)
133. Trapeang Rolous Community (Prey Veng)