

Joint Statement

Phnom Penh, May 02, 2022

The press associations and organizations, journalists and non-governmental organizations working to promote the right to information, freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Cambodia take part in the celebration of World Press Freedom Day 2022. With the celebration of this year's Press Freedom Day under the theme “Journalism Under Digital Siege”, we (as mentioned below), urge the Royal Government and all stakeholders to pay attention on the monitoring and resolving the following requests:

1. To take effective measures to end impunity for all crimes against journalists by bringing the perpetrators and accomplices of murder, attack, intimidation, physical and sexual harassment to justice, and for the victims, families and relatives to obtain justice.
2. To convey the request to the Ministry of Information for reviewing and validating the licenses that the Ministry has revoked in 2017 up to the present so that they can continue to participate in press activities and to provide information to the people.
3. To effectively implement the remarks by the Head of the Royal Government, Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, to continue the arrangement of annual meeting mechanism with journalists and effective practice of treating journalists as an indispensable partner in promoting social accountability and eliminating inactivity and corruption, as well as improving the right to information. In addition, please continue to strengthen the indispensable partnership between the Royal Government and the journalists through a positive and timely response, and address any issues or challenges to the work of journalists. In particular, please expand collaboration and work together to raise public awareness regarding media literacy, information and digital system.
4. To convey the request to the Royal Government to expedite the process of approving relevant bills such as the Right to Information Act, and to expedite the process of amending the Press Law to promote access to more information for journalists. At the same time, it is proposed to conduct a comprehensive consultation, including the acceptance of input from partners and stakeholders on relevant draft laws, such as the Draft Law on Cybercrime, Digital Security and other legal rules and regulations that may affect the right to information, freedom of the press and freedom of expression.
5. To participate more actively to eliminate all forms of harassment on women journalists, such as verbal abuse, insults and physical and sexual harassment. Such actions will help enhance and encourage the participation of women in the field of journalism, which is essential to ensure that all women's issues in society are attentively addressed and responded.
6. To encourage and promote the diversity in media from all political party tendencies to ensure broad and comprehensive access to information from all political parties that will take part and compete in the election of commune/Sangkat council and national elections in 2023.
7. To end the use of the Penal Code to prosecute and imprison journalists, and to amend any content that infringes on the right to information, freedom of the press, and freedom of expression.

Press Freedom Day 2022 is organized by a group of 26 organizations, press associations, journalists and non-governmental organizations. A debate and discussion with about 200 participants will be held for the entire day on May 2nd, 2022, at Himawari Hotel in Phnom Penh Capital. Topics discussed will include the impact of the NIG sub-decree and PID sub-decree on the freedom of the press and media, the right to information and reporting on elections, and the ethics of journalism and public trust.

We are grateful that this event will be attended by people working in different institutions and workplaces, including journalists, citizen journalists, human rights defenders, NGO representatives, jurists, representatives of United Nations agencies, officials from government institutions, members of parliament and representatives from political parties, etc. On top of that, the general public is also encouraged to participate and join us by answering questions with regard to freedom in order to receive rewards and following live broadcasts on social media platforms.

For further information, please contact:

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NGOs and associations involved in supporting the statement

1. Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA)
2. the Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)
3. Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)
4. Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL)
5. Centre of Alliance for Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)
6. Cambodian Youth Network (CYN)
7. Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (STT)
8. Youth Resources Development Program (YRDP)
9. ActionAid Cambodia (AAC)
10. Building Community Voices (BCV)
11. Women's Media Centre of Cambodia (WMC)
12. Cambodian Human Right and Development Association (ADHOC)
13. Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT)
14. Advocacy and Policy Institute (API)
15. Conserve Indigenous Peoples Languages Organization (CIPL)
16. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
17. Cambodia Indigenous Youth Association (CIYA)
18. Transparency International Cambodia (TIC)
19. Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)
20. Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD)
21. Community Legal Education Center (CLEC)
22. International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)