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The Cambodia Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”) marks World Press Freedom Day

3 May 2023 will mark World Press Freedom Day, a day to honor the crucial role that journalists play in delivering accurate and reliable information to the public, sometimes at the risk of their lives, and to recall the importance of press freedom in promoting good governance and democracy. This day also serves as a reminder that governments around the world need to fulfill their obligation to promote and respect press freedom, and enable a free and vibrant media landscape.

Unfortunately, CCHR observes that independent media outlets and journalists in Cambodia continue to face numerous barriers to conducting their legitimate reporting work freely and without self-censorship. Ongoing targeting of independent media outlets and journalists for exercising their fundamental right to freedom of expression continues to plague Cambodian society. Physical attacks against journalists, some resulting in deaths, the revocation of media licenses, and judicial harassment remain common tactics used to silence critical voices.

Between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022, 20 journalists were judicially harassed for their reporting work, and four media licenses were revoked. Cambodian authorities have also failed to undertake effective, independent, and transparent investigations into the deaths of the 15 journalists who were murdered in the two last decades. Perpetrators are therefore yet to be prosecuted in accordance with international human rights standards.

In the context of the continued deterioration of the media environment in Cambodia, it is all the more crucial to recall that democracy cannot thrive without free and independent media.

To mark this year’s World Press Freedom Day, CCHR will conduct a series of office and online campaign activities to educate the public about this day and freedom of expression, and to raise awareness about the roles of journalists and media in a democratic society. Please join CCHR in the following events:

- On 27 April, CCHR will conduct an event to launch 15 journalist and human rights defender profiles and deliver an award for the best youth project on human rights.
- From 28 April to 12 May, CCHR will publish 15 journalist and human rights defender profiles and 15 short videos on Facebook.
- On 1 and 2 May, CCHR will repost video animations on freedom of expression and independent media.
- On 3 May, CCHR will conduct a radio talk show on the role of independent media in a democratic society.

For more information, please contact CCHR’s Sustaining Independent Media and Fundamental Freedom Project Coordinator, Mr. Houn Phorn, at phorn@cchrcambodia.org or +85570757884.

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Notes to the Editor:

Founded in November 2002, CCHR is a non-aligned, independent, non-governmental organization that works to promote and protect democracy and respect for human rights – primarily civil and political rights – in Cambodia.

CCHR is a member of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), the global network for freedom of expression, and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. CCHR is also a member of the World Organization Against Torture's SOS-Torture Network and OECD Watch.

The Cambodian Human Rights Portal (www.sithi.org), managed by CCHR, is the 2011 winner of the Information Society Innovation Fund Award in the category of Rights and Freedoms, and the 2013 winner of the Communication for Social Change Award awarded by the Centre for Communication and Social Change at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia.