



មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលសិទ្ធិមនុស្សកម្ពុជា
Cambodian Center for Human Rights

CCHR PRESS RELEASE – Phnom Penh, 24 December 2013

CCHR expresses concerns over the call by the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia to implement a zero-tolerance policy against illegal strikes

[The Cambodian Center for Human Rights](#) (“CCHR”) is greatly concerned by the statement released by the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (“GMAC”) on 18 December 2013, claiming that the Royal Government of Cambodia (the “RGC”) appears to be too patient in dealing with unions. GMAC represents more than 400 garment and footwear factories in the country and claims in its statement that “crafty” unions constantly use violent, non-procedural strikes and demonstrations to demand benefits from the employer.

GMAC’s statement calls upon the RGC to create an effective mechanism to protect the rights of investors in order to attract more large investment into Cambodia. Furthermore, GMAC states that the RGC “*must effectively enforce the law [...] in order to avoid violent and illegal strikes.*” It goes on to state that GMAC supports the RGC’s “*stringent enforcement of the law*” in relation to all parties: employer and union/worker/employee. In addition, the *Phnom Penh Post* newspaper [reported](#) on 19 December 2013 that it had obtained a letter sent by GMAC to the Minister of Labor urging the RGC to strictly enforce a zero-tolerance policy towards “*illegal*” strikes and to discuss and review the draft Law on Trade Unions for submission as soon as possible.

CCHR is concerned that such statements calling for zero-tolerance on illegal strikes will only exacerbate problems within the garment sector. Regardless of the legality of the strike, a zero-tolerance policy will only ignore the root causes of the labor dispute and most likely lead to further violent crack downs against workers and union members.

CCHR Coordinator of the Business & Human Rights Project, Duch Piseth comments:

“Labour disputes must be solved peacefully. The use of force or zero-tolerance policies will only lead to further distress within the garment sector. By making such statements GMAC is only adding fuel to the fire. Instead we call on GMAC to work together with workers and unions to settle disputes peacefully. We also remind the RGC that regardless of the legality of a strike it must respect everyone’s right to freedom of expression and association and refrain from using violence against peaceful strikers and protesters.”

For more information, please contact Mr. Piseth Duch via telephone at +855 (0) 12 71 23 71 or e-mail at duchpiseth@cchrcambodia.org or CCHR Consultant Elise Tillet via telephone at +855 (0) 77 70 97 23 or e-mail at elise.tillet@cchrcambodia.org.

– END –

Notes to the Editor:

CCHR, founded in November 2002, is a non-aligned, independent, non-governmental organization that works to promote and protect democracy and respect for human rights throughout Cambodia.

CCHR is a member of International Freedom of Expression Exchanges (IFEX), the global network for freedom of expression. CCHR is also a member of the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) SOS-Torture Network.

The Cambodian Human Rights Portal www.sithi.org 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 of Communication and Social Change at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia.