



JOINT STATEMENT

Civil Society Appeals for Filing without Processing by Kampong Chhnang Provincial Court for ADHOC's Staff Mr. Sam Chankea

Phnom Penh, 26 October 2010

We, the civil society coalitions consist of The Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (“CHRAC”), The Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (“COMFREL”) and The Housing Rights Task Force (“HRTF”), wish to express our grave concern about the recent complaint lodged by Mr. Thay Hy, representative of KDC Company against Mr. Sam Chankea, a provincial staff of the local human rights ADHOC, to Kampong Chhnang provincial court, after his opinion was expressed over a land case conflicted between a large number of villagers and the company in that province was loudly heard through the media.

These NGO coalitions learn by the fact that the ADHOC staff is recently summoned by provincial court’s prosecutor in relation to the allegation of “disinformation and defamation” against the KDC company, following his comments made on a land dispute in Kampong Chhnang province which was broadcasted on Radio Free Asia (RFA) on 26 December 2009 at 8.30 pm and was subsequently quoted also in Koh Santepheap newspaper dated 30 December 2009.

After the complaint was lodged by the company, on 21 October 2010 Mr. Heng Luy, vice-prosecutor of the provincial court summoned Mr. Sam Chankea and other two victims representatives in order to question them in relation to the fact that the human rights worker had expressed his opinion through the RFA and Koh Santepheap newspapers. It is noted that the KDC company is owned by Lauk Chumteav Chea Kheng, the wife of Minister of Mining and Energy.

The Civil society notes with the concern that the allegation against Mr. Chankea is just based on his comments made on the severe and long-standing land conflict between the company and more than 64 families of which the villagers have sued the company for having bulldozed their land, damaged their properties, grabbed their land and violated their rights. Based on the content and the meaning of the topic broadcasted and expressed in the media, we are of the view that the ADHOC staff had just exercised the freedom of expression which is guaranteed by the Constitution and articles 163 and 167 of the Civil Code of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Therefore, we would like to strongly urge the Kampong Chhnang provincial court to file without processing for Mr. Sam Chankea in this alleged case so as to ensure that anyone’s freedom of expression, and freedom of speech is adequately and properly upheld.

For more information, please contact:

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