



Joint Statement:

Media groups call on authorities to step up fight against impunity for crimes against journalists

Phnom Penh, November 2, 2020 — On this International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, the Cambodian Journalists Alliance (CamboJA), the Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM), Overseas Press Club of Cambodia (OPCC) and International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) express our deep concern over systems which rarely bring perpetrators of crimes against journalists to justice, and we urge authorities to take immediate action to ensure effective, independent and transparent investigations into such crimes.

Since 1994, at least 15 journalists have been killed in Cambodia. In almost all cases, the victims were targeted because of their work. Twelve of the 15 journalists killed were reporting on sensitive issues at the time of their death. And in 12 cases, no one has been convicted for the killing of those journalists.

Crimes against journalists and the persecution of journalists seem to be on the rise. In the last 10 months alone (January to October 2020), CamboJA recorded 59 journalists who have been the victim of violence, arrest, death and court complaints. Of those, 27 were arrested, seven were victims of violence and one died in what police have said was a traffic accident.

Crimes against journalists bring real threats—and not just to the reporters themselves. Journalists are responsible for reporting the news, and writing analysis and commentary articles to support lively expression and public debate. Independent journalists play an important role in holding those in power accountable and make a significant contribution to a just society.

When journalists are subjected to violence because of what they have written or reported, freedom of expression is restricted. That freedom is replaced by fears that the public will have no access to information, and that those in power will not be held accountable for their actions. When the state fails to investigate and punish violence against journalists, this indicates that crimes such as these are allowed.

The undersigned media organizations condemn the impunity for crimes against journalists, a problem which affects Cambodia’s society as a whole. We call on authorities to prosecute the perpetrators of crimes committed against journalists, and for the government to ensure the safety of all journalists so that we can exercise our right to freely report without fear.

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