



STATEMENT: Drop the Case Against Former Cambodia Daily Journalists

25 February 2021

We, the three undersigned journalists and media organizations, call on the court to speed up the case against former Cambodia Daily journalists Aun Pheap and Zsombor Peter. We call on prosecutors to present any evidence they may have that would prove the journalists' alleged guilt of the crime of "incitement to commit a felony", or otherwise drop the appeal to continue the case.

The case has gone on too long, upended two journalists' careers and lives, and proven to be without merit and a shred of proof of wrongdoing since a complaint was filed against them more than three years ago. We believe Pheap, an ex-Daily reporter, and Peter, a former associate editor of the newspaper, are survivors of a campaign of judicial harassment and intimidation that has seen no legal justification.

As dictated by Cambodian and international law, the journalists are innocent until proven guilty, and after more than three years, the court has failed to prove their guilt. In November, the Ratanakiri Provincial Court [dropped the charges](#) against them as the plaintiff withdrew his complaint. Why has the [prosecutor appealed](#) the court's decision?

The journalists have been persecuted, on the surface, over a straightforward reporting assignment in 2017 to interview citizens about that year's elections. Beneath the official claims of merely following legal procedures is an attack on two award-winning reporters, and on our profession, and on press freedom in Cambodia.

As colleagues of Pheap and Zsombor, we cannot stand by. Instead, we stand in solidarity with them, and use our voices to state clearly: Drop the case. Do not infringe on our right to report the news, without fear or favor. We stand together in support of a free press, and we hope other journalists, the public and private sectors, and all others, will join us in its defense.

Signed,

Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)

Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA)

Overseas Press Club of Cambodia (OPCC)