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Cambodian Journalists Alliance

CamboJA Concerned Over Conviction of Radio Station Owner Sok Oudom

Phnom Penh, December 22, 2020 – The Cambodian Journalists Alliance (CamboJA) is seriously concerned over the conviction of yet another local journalist today for carrying out the important task of disseminating critical news to the Cambodian people.

The Kampong Chhnang Provincial Court convicted and sentenced Sok Oudom, the owner of Rithysen radio and website, to 20 months in prison with a fine of 20 million riel over incitement charges. The complaint was filed by Nou Samreth, deputy commander of Kampong Chhnang military operations area, after Sok Oudom used a Facebook livestream to report about an ongoing land dispute involving the military in the province.

Following publication of the story, Sok Oudom was arrested on May 13 and detained at Kampong Chhnang Provincial Prison on May 15, 2020. Sok Oudom was accused of broadcasting false news while reporting the story with a group of journalists on May 12. The land dispute was between provincial residents and the military in Chieb commune, Teuk Phos district, Kampong Chhnang. He was then charged with “incitement to commit felonies”.

Following the verdict, Sok Oudom expressed frustration at the court’s decision and said that he would appeal the conviction.

Nop Vy, executive director of CamboJA, said: “The conviction of Sok Oudom shows that journalists who dare to report and uncover the interests of military and powerful officials are still being persecuted through the judiciary, with the use of the Cambodian Criminal Code rather than provisions in the Law on the Press. We are concerned that mechanisms for monitoring and promoting social justice are not being strengthened.”

CamboJA, which has about 100 members and board members, calls on the court to reconsider the conviction of Sok Oudom and immediately stop using criminal charges against journalists. This will ensure that all journalists can exercise their right to report freely and without fear, and to ensure that the Cambodian Constitution, which is the supreme law of the land, is effectively enforced.

For more details please contact:

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