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Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association

**Statement: CamboJA condemns attacks on journalist in Siem Reap and calls for justice**

**Phnom Penh, March 16, 2021** – The Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA) condemns the recent assault of a journalist and asks the provincial authorities to arrest the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

The attack against Pran Sean, the publisher of Khmer Empire News took place at 12:30 am on March 14, 2021, at Prasat Beng Mealea village, Beng Mealea commune, Svay Leu district, Siem Reap province. According to Mr. Pran Sean, the assault was carried out by two men armed with wooden sticks. The journalist received serious injuries to his head, arms, legs, and nose, as well as tooth fractures, and is being treated at a private clinic in Siem Reap.

Mr. Pran Sean was traveling from Siem Reap to Preah Vihear to report on illegal timber trading in the provinces.

This is not the first time that journalists reporting on forestry crimes and other offenses have been threatened and beaten.

In September 2020, four online news journalists were attacked near the border of Memot district, Tbong Khmum province, by a group of five to seven men armed with knives, axes, and sticks, and suspected to be timber traders. One of the four journalists received a serious rib injury in the attack, while another reporter was slightly injured. As of March 2021, the authorities have not been able to identify the perpetrators.

In the first two-and-a-half months of 2021, CamboJA has recorded a total of nine cases in which journalists were subjected to various forms of persecution, including violence, threats, discrimination, arrests, and legal actions.

Nop Vy, executive director of CamboJA, said: “We are deeply concerned about the continuing impunity and the fact that no perpetrators have been brought to justice. Journalists have been repeatedly beaten and subjected to violence.”

CamboJA has also noted that journalists reporting and commenting on the spread of COVID-19 have faced persecution.

From January to early March 2021, CamboJA found that the Ministry of Information revoked at least three media licenses. On February 25, the Ministry of Information revoked the license of Angkor Today, owned by Ung Kongkea and run by a Chinese editor named Shen Kaidong. On March 12, the Ministry of Information announced the revocation of the license of the San Prum news website (www.sanprum-news.com), which was granted to Si Sopheak, with Prum San, a former adviser to the Ministry of Information, as the administrator. The same day, they revoked the license of the news website (www.live-daily.com) which was granted to Tep



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Virak. These three news websites have been accused of spreading false information, maliciously endangering public health, and causing chaos in society, which could jeopardize national security and tarnish the royal prestige of the Government of Cambodia, which is a serious violation of the profession and the contract that the parties have filed with the Ministry of Information.

CamboJA observes that the 1995 Press Law was not used to demand for a correction or rebroadcast especially in the case of Angkor Today.

CamboJA urges the Ministry of Information to strengthen the implementation of the Press Law, particularly to conduct a thorough and independent investigation before issuing warnings and taking any administrative measures.

CamboJA, which has more than 100 journalist members and board members, is actively involved in promoting the professionalism and ethics of journalists and is serving the public interest by promoting freedom and access to information of the people of Cambodia.

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