



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Press Statement

**"Free and independent press is not a license to break the law with impunity",
States the Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson**

Phnom Penh, 13 February 2023 – The Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation is utterly dismayed at and squarely dismisses the politically-driven, prejudiced and biased concerns of some foreign embassies as to the revoked license of a foreign-funded media outlet in Cambodia.

1. An administrative action against a rule-breaking entity does not merit any worry at all. What should be alarming is the mounting disinformation and intentional slanders, which undermine the essence and principles of human rights and freedoms. Regrettably, those Missions' biased narrative turned their blind eyes to the indisputable fact that the media center grossly breached profession of journalism, harmed honor and prestige of Cambodian government, and refused to amend mistakes based on the provisions of the Law on Press Regime. Its Article 10 (b) stipulates, *"In case of a public figure, any false allegation or imputation, which the journalist publishes or reproduces with malicious intent against such public figure, is libel and is prohibited."*
2. A purported "free and independent press" is not a license to break the law with impunity. Independence cannot be divorced from responsibility and accountability. To claim that the organization offers fact-based reporting is both unfounded and prejudiced. The truth is it engaged in spreading fake

news and fabricating Cambodia's internal affairs on humanitarian assistance delivery. The move against an unprofessional media outlet does not undermine the vibrant press freedom in the Kingdom, but contributes to the strengthening of profession of journalism.

3. To demand Cambodian government, through a media platform, to revisit its decision equates to violation of Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR). Representing civilized and rule-based states, the embassies should carry out their functions in close observance of Article 41 (1) and 41 (2) of the VCDR, which underline that diplomats "have a duty not to interfere in the internal affairs of the [receiving] State" and mandate, "All official business with the receiving State shall be conducted with or through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the receiving State" respectively. ENDS

