

Joint Statement

Stop the Violence: A Call for Release, Investigation and Reparation

We, the Cambodian and International Civil Society Organizations represented in this statement, condemn the use of armed force and escalating violence against the Cambodian people.

At the start of 2014, following three weeks of peaceful demonstrations in Phnom Penh, tensions increased dramatically as authorities brutally cracked down on garment factory workers, who were demonstrating for a minimum wage of USD 160 per month. The garment industry, which represents 80 % of Cambodia's export earnings is well established and internationally significant, producing clothes for many well-known global brands, such as Levis®, H&M, Gap, Puma and others.

On the 3rd January 2014, four civilians were shot dead by military forces, at least 39 people were injured, including a 17 year old boy and a pregnant woman, and thirteen more men were arrested near Canadia Industrial Park on Veng Sreng road, Phnom Penh. The previous day, during clashes between security forces and striking workers in front of Yak Jin factory on National Road 4, ten men were arrested by the Military Special Command Unit 911. Those arrested included the human rights defender and President of the Independent and Democracy of Informal Economic Association (IDEA) Vorn Pao, Theng Savoeun from the Coalition of Cambodian Farmer Community (CCFC), Chan Puthisak from the Boeung Kak Community. In total, 23 people were arrested by armed forces. Some of the detainees were badly beaten and left without access to needed medical treatment for several days.

All arrested appeared before Phnom Penh Municipal Court on 3rd and 4th January and were charged under **Articles 218** and **414** of the Penal Code (intentional violence with aggravating circumstances and intentional damage with aggravating circumstances). The Royal Government of Cambodia then de facto suspended the Cambodian Constitutional Rights of Freedom of Assembly, Association and Peaceful Demonstration as guaranteed in **Articles 37** and **41**.

We insist that the Royal Government of Cambodia:

- Release the 23 detainees immediately without any conditions;
- Form an independent investigation committee to find those responsible for this violence;
- Ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice without delay and provide redress to those injured and to the families of the people killed;
- Stop the use of violence and excessive force, as well as the arbitrary arrest of civilians and instead ensure the protection of the residents of Cambodia;
- Restore and respect the Cambodian Constitution and domestic law as well as all ratified international human rights instruments, including the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Royal Government of Cambodia must ensure the implementation of democracy and human rights in all its actions.

According to monitors, the clash started when the authorities used electric batons toward the protestors, who then replied by throwing stones. In response, the military used disproportionate force by firing live ammunitions in the crowd.

The use of military soldiers to defend private businesses and crackdown on civilian protests is excessive, and the use of security guards and plain-clothes forces to arrest and detain civilians is illegal. Live ammunitions, sling shots, tear gas, electric batons, metal sticks and the display of excessive force must never be used against civilians who, by law, are entitled to exercise their fundamental rights.

The use of any state force must strictly follow the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality, and the demonstrations must comply at all time with international standards in maintaining public order.

We strongly condemn the use of brutally excessive force, arbitrary arrests, killings and inhumane treatment by the Cambodian authorities.

We appeal to the international community to take action on this inhumane treatment on Cambodian citizens.

We also urge that members of Garment Manufacturers Association of Cambodia (GMAC) drop legal actions against garment unions.

As a matter of priority, we encourage international embassy staff to visit the detainees in prison to ensure their wellbeing.

We call on the International Textile Companies to consider the demand of the garment workers to obtain an increase of monthly wages and improvement of their working conditions.

We, the **72** undersigned Civil Society Organizations, believe that violence against citizens is never acceptable.

This statement is endorsed by the following Cambodian and International Civil Society Organizations:

1. ACR/CARITAS AUSTRALIA
2. Advocacy and Policy Institute (API)
3. Alliance Action for Rural Restoration Organization (AARR)
4. Banteay Srei
5. Boat People SOS
6. Bread for the World
7. Buddhism for Social Development Action (BSDA)
8. Buddhism Foundation For Community Development (BFCD)
9. Building Community Voices (BCV)
10. Cambodia Organization to Promote Kui Culture (OPKC)
11. Cambodia Women Crisis Center (CWCC)
12. Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)
13. Cambodian Defender Project (CDP)
14. Cambodian Food and Service Worker Federation (CFSWF)

15. Cambodian HIV/AIDS Education and Care (*CHEC*)
16. Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC)
17. Cambodian Human Rights Task Force (CHRTF)
18. Cambodian Independent Teacher Association (CITA)
19. Cambodian Organization for Children and Development (COCD)
20. Cambodian Rural Development Team (CRDT)
21. Cambodian Volunteers for Society (CVS)
22. Cambodian Youth Network (CYN)
23. Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
24. Cambodian Labour Confederation (CLC)
25. Center for Labor Rights of Cambodia (CLARI)
26. Christian for Social Justice (CSJ)
27. Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers's Democratic Union (C.CAWDU)
28. Coalition of Cambodian Farmer's Community (CCFC)
29. Coalition to Abolish Modern-day Slavery in Asia (CAMSA)
30. COMFREL
31. Community Capacities for Development (CCD)
32. Community Legal Education Center (CLEC)
33. Community Organization for People's Action (COPA)
34. Community Peace-Building Network (CPN)
35. Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)
36. DanChurchAid/ChristianAid (DCA/CA)
37. DANMISSION
38. East West Management Institute (EWMI)
39. Equitable Cambodia (EC)
40. Finn Church Aid / Asia
41. Forum Syd
42. Four Regions Slum Network (FRSN)
43. Free Trade Union of Worker of Cambodia (FTUWC)
44. Gender and Development for Cambodia (GAD/C)
45. HIV/AIDS Coordination Committee (HACC)
46. Housing Rights Task Force (HRTF)
47. Human Rights Ambassador for Salem-News.com, UK
48. Human Settlement Foundation (HSF)
49. Inclusive Development International (IDI)
50. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
51. Independent Monk for Justice and Peace Network (IMNSJ)
52. Indigenous Community Support Organization (ICSO)
53. International Volunteers of Yamagata (IVY)
54. Khmer Akphiwat Khmer Organization (KAKO)
55. Khmer Association For Development Of Country-side Cambodia (KAFDOC)
56. Khmer Civilization Foundation (KCF)
57. Khmer Institute for National Development (KIND)
58. Khmer Kampuchea Krom For Human Rights and Development Association (KKKHRDA)
59. Khmer Youth and Social Development (KYSD)

60. Khmer Youth Association (KYA)
61. Korean Missionary Society (KOMISO)
62. Leaders and Organizers of Community Organizations in Asia (LOCOA)
63. LICADHO-CAMBODIA
64. LICADHO-CANADA
65. Monitoring Evaluation & Research Institute (MERI)
66. Morodok
67. My Village
68. New Hope Cambodia (NHC)
69. NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child (NGOCRC)
70. NGO Education Partnership (NEP)
71. NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF)
72. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
73. Oxfam
74. Partnership for Development in Kampuchea (PADEK)
75. People Center for Development and Peace (PDP)
76. People in Need-Cambodia
77. People's Forum on Cambodia (PEFOC, J)
78. Ponleu Ney Kdey Sangkhum (PNKS)
79. Ponlok Khmer
80. RiverKids Foundation
81. Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (STT)
82. SILAKA
83. STAR Kampuchea (SK)
84. Strey Khmer (SK)
85. Transparency International (TI)
86. Urban Poor Women Development (UPWD)
87. Welthungerhilfe
88. Working Group for Peace (WGP)
89. World Renew
90. Youth Council of Cambodia (YCC)
91. Youth For Peace (YFP)
92. Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP)