

JOINT STATEMENT

THE CULTURE OF IMPUNITY AND VIOLENCE MUST STOP

Phnom Penh, 31st May 2012- We, Cambodian and International civil society organizations represented in this statement, condemn the use of armed force and escalating violence against citizens peacefully defending their land, labor and natural resources rights. We are referring to not only the events on 22nd May 2012, when dozens of peaceful Boeung Kak Lake (BKL) protesters were violently dispersed and two days later when fifteen (fourteen women and one male) BKL residents were sent to Prey Sar prison and charged or convicted of unfounded criminal offenses¹, but also the recent shooting incidents—the killings of environmental activist Chut Wutty² in Koh Kong province and 14-year old girl Heng Chantha³ in Kratie province, and the shooting of three young women protesting for better working conditions in Svay Rieng province. These incidents are particularly disturbing because they indicate an increasing readiness on the part of security and military forces to use lethal force against civilians.

The year 2012 has already witnessed at least five such instances, not including numerous other human rights abuses. We are deeply concerned, shocked and saddened about this escalation of violence, particularly in disputes related to Economic Land Concessions (ELCs). Pursuant to Article 41 of the Cambodian Constitution and international conventions to which Cambodia is a party, all citizens enjoy a fundamental right to free expression, which includes the right to protest against decisions of public authorities that infringe on their rights and livelihood. In practice, the exercise of this right is all too often denied or met with violent repression.

Cambodian citizens have a right to live under the rule of law. They deserve to be protected, served with dignity and fairness based on universally agreed basic rights. Public authorities not only have a duty and obligation to ensure that a culture of impunity is never condoned but also must make fighting against impunity a priority. All instances involving the use of firearms against civilians should be promptly, thoroughly and impartially investigated. Investigations that find shootings to be “accidental” or the result of low-ranking officers acting on their own initiative should be supported by evidence gathered in a rigorous, transparent manner. At the very least, protection against threats and intimidation should be provided to witnesses and all victims should have access to effective judicial verdict and justice.

The recent shootings took place despite the fact that Prime Minister Hun Sen has made an announcement prohibiting the use of firearms against protesters⁴ and issued a moratorium on the granting of ELCs⁵. Civil society organizations welcome the Prime Minister's much needed directives, which work to improve human rights in Cambodia. However, the Prime Minister's directives should be followed by detailed, binding regulations that highlight how public authorities—both local and provincial and armed forces—should thoroughly and systematically implement these directives.

It is necessary to fully review all existing concessions to ensure they all are fully compliant with relevant national and international legal frameworks. Gaps in resources or technical capacity should be identified and addressed, and the implementation of these decisions should be monitored and reported to the public.

We, the 157 undersigned civil society organizations, believe that violence against citizens is never acceptable and should cease immediately and will also continue to monitor individual cases related to land, labor and natural resources rights. In addition, we will seek to engage the Royal Government of Cambodia with the aim to strengthen the rule of law and to break the current cycle of violence and impunity.

¹ The Phnom Penh Post, Friday, May 25th, 2012, P. 1-2; The Phnom Penh Post, Monday, May 28th, 2012, P. 1
² The Phnom Penh Post, Friday, April 27th, 2012, P.1- 2
³ The Cambodian Daily, Thursday, May 17th, 2012
⁴ The Cambodian Daily, Wednesday, February 1st, 2012, P. 1-2
⁵ Royal Government of Cambodia, No.01 BB, 07th of May, Directive on Measures to Strengthen and Enhance the Effectiveness of the Economic Land Concession Management

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2. Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), #9-11, Street 476, Toul Tompoung I, Chamkamorn, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Tel: (855)23 214 152, Fax: +855 23 216 009, email: info@ccc-cambodia.org, web: www.ccc-cambodia.org;
3. Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC), Address: # 9E0, St. 330, Boeung Keng Kong III, Chamkamorn, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Tel: (855) 23 301 415, Fax: (855) 23 218 759, email: chrac@forum.org.kh, web: www.chrac.org

3S Rivers Protection Network (3SPN) / Action for Environment and Communities (AEC) / Action for Research and Development (ARD) / ActionAid International-Cambodia / Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) / Affiliated Network for Social Accountability-ly-East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP CAMBODIA) / Aide Et Action International-Cambodia / Alliance Action for Rural Restoration-Organization (AARR) / Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) / Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD)-India / American Center for International Labor Solidarity / American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) Cambodia / Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRIC) / Assistance to Poor Children's Agency (APCA) / Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) / Banthey Srei (BS) / Buddhism for Development (BFD) / Building Communities Voices (BCV) / Burma Partnership / Cambodia Watchdog Council (CWC) / Cambodia Women's Crisis Center (WCCC) / Cambodia's Media Forum on Environment (CMFE) / Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU) / Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM) / Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (CHR) / Cambodian Children's Trust (CCT) / Cambodian Civil Society Partnership (CCSP) / Cambodian Confederation of Unions (CCU) / Cambodian Defenders Project (CDP) / Cambodian Food and Service Workers Federation (GTSWF) / Cambodian HIV/AIDS Education and Care (CHEC) / Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC) / Cambodian Human Rights and Development (AHOC) / Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association (CITA) / Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO) / Cambodian Mental Health Nurses Association (CMHNA) / Cambodian National Research Organization (CNRO) / Cambodian Rural Development Team (CRDT) / Cambodian Volunteer for Society (CVS) / Cambodian Worker Center for Development (DWCD) / Cambodian Youth Network (CYN) / Cambodian Center for the Protection of Children's Rights (CCPCR) / CAPE Cambodia / Centre for Environmental Justice-Sri Lanka (CEJ) / Child Hope Cambodia / Children and Life Association (CLA) / Children Development Association

/ Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) / Christians for Social Justice (CSJ) / CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation- South Africa / Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability (CISA) / Coalition of Cambodian Farmer Community (CCFC) / Community Capacities for Development (CCD) / Community Economic Development (CED) / Community Empowerment and Development Team (CEDT) / Community Legal Education Center (CLEC) / Community Managed Development Partners (CMDP) / Community Peace-Building Network (CPN) / Concern Worldwide Cambodia / Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) / CORD South & East Asia / Culture and Environment Preservation Association (CEPA) / DanChurchAid/ChristianAid / Danmission-Cambodia Development and Partnership in Action (DPA) / Development and Peace-Canada / Diakonia / Elephant Livelihood Initiative Environment (ELIE) / Empowering Youth in Cambodia (EYC) / Environment and Society Organization (ESO) / Environmental Protection and Development Organization (EPDO) / Epic Arts / Equitable Cambodia / Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst.e.V (EED) / Finn Church Aid / Cooperazione e Sviluppo (CESVI) / Farmer of Cambodia Organization (FOC) / Forum Syd / Gandhi Peace Foundatoin (GPF)-India / Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WALHI)-based in Indonesia / Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC) / Heinrich Böll Stiftung Cambodia / HEKS Cambodia / Highlander Association (HA) / Housing Rights Task Force (HRTF) / ICCO & KIA Southeast Asia and Pacific / Inclusive Development International

Independent Democracy of Informal Economic Association (IDEA) / Indigenous Community Support Organization (ICSO) / Indigenous Rights Active Members (IRAM) / International Center for Conciliation (IC/C) / International Network for International Development (INFID) - Indonesia / Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC) / Jesuit Service Cambodia / KABBANI - the other direction-India / Kampuchea Women's Welfare Action (KWWA) / Kelompok Studi Konservasi (KSK) - based in Indonesia / Khmer Association for Development of Country-side Cambodia (KAFDOC) / Khmer Institute for National Development (KIND) / Khmer Youth Association (KYA) / Korean Missionary Society (KMS) / Krom Akhphat Phum (KAMP) / Kunathor (TKN) / LICADHO Canada / Life with Dignity (LWD) / Maryknoll / Mercy Teams International / Mlup Baitong (MB) / My Village (MV) / Neak Poan Organization for Development (NOP) / Neutral and Impartial Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (NICFC) / NGO Committee on the Rights of the Child (NGOCRC) / NGO Education Partnership (NEP) / Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) / Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)-Cambodia / Operations Enfants du Cambodge (OEC) / Organization to Promote Kuy Culture (OPKC) / Partnership for Development in Cambodia (PADEK) / People in Need Cambodia (PIN-Cambodia) / People's Action for Change (PAC) / Phum Baitong / Phnom Ney SangKhum (PNKS) / Ponleuk Nsey Kham (PNK) / Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK) / Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC) / Rural Animal Health Development Organization (RAHDO) / Riverkids Foundation / Sahmakum Teang Traut (STT) / Servants of Cambodia / Shelter for the Poor- Bangladesh / Silaka / Social Action for Change (SAC) / Southeast Asia Development Program (SADP) / STAR Kampuchea / Streif Khmer Organization (SKO) / Student Representative Association for Children and Elder Fund / The Cambodian Center for the Protection of the Children's Rights (CCPCR) / The NGO Forum on ADB-Philippines / The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) / Trocaire / Urban Poor Development Fund (UPWF) / Village Economic Support Organization (VESO) / Village Focus Cambodia (VFC) / Volunteers for Sustainable Development (VSD) / Weithungherille Cambodia (DWHH/GAA) / Women Association for Community Development (WAACD) / Women Peacemakers / Women's Network for Unity (WNU) / Workers' Information Centre (WIC) / World Rainforest Movement (WRM) / World Vision Cambodia (WVC) / Yayasan Transformasi Lepra (YTLI)-Indonesia / Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP)

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

- 1) 3S Rivers Protection Network (3SPN)
- 2) Action for Environment and Communities (AEC)
- 3) Action for Research and Development (ARD)
- 4) ActionAid International-Cambodia
- 5) Advocacy and Policy Institute (API)
- 6) Affiliated Network for Social Accountability-East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP CAMBODIA)
- 7) Aide Et Action International-Cambodia
- 8) Alliance Action for Rural Restoration Organization (AARR)
- 9) American Center for International Labor Solidarity /American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations (ACILS/AFL-CIO), Cambodia
- 10) Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)
- 11) Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC)
- 12) Assistance to Poor Children's Agency (APCA)
- 13) Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD)-India
- 14) Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)
- 15) Banteay Srei (BS)
- 16) Buddhism for Development (BFD)
- 17) Building Communities Voices (BCV)
- 18) Burma Partnership
- 19) Cambodia Watchdog Council (CWC)
- 20) Cambodia Women's Crisis Center (CWCC)
- 21) Cambodia's Media Forum on Environment (CMFE)
- 22) Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU)
- 23) Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)
- 24) Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (CCHR)
- 25) Cambodian Children's Trust (CCT)
- 26) Cambodian Civil Society Partnership (CCSP)
- 27) Cambodian Confederation of Unions (CCU)
- 28) Cambodian Defenders Project (CDP)
- 29) Cambodian Food and Service Workers Federation (CFSWF)
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- 34) Cambodian Indigenous Youth Association (CIYA)
- 35) Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO)
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- 42) Cambodian Center for the Protection of Children's Rights (CCPCR)
- 43) CARE Cambodia
- 44) Center for Advanced Study (CAS)
- 45) Centre for Environmental Justice-Sri Lanka
- 46) Child Hope Cambodia
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- 95) Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)
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- 97) KABANI - the other direction-India
- 98) Kampuchea Women's Welfare Action (KWWA)
- 99) Kelompok Studi Konservasi (KSK)- Indonesia
- 100) Khmer Association For Development Of Country-side Cambodia (KAFDOC)
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- 108) Maryknoll
- 109) Mercy Teams International
- 110) Mlup Baitong (MB)
- 111) My Village (MVi)
- 112) Neak Poan Organization For Development (NOP)

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- 124) Phum Baitong
- 125) Ponleu Ney Kdey SangKhum (PNKS)
- 126) Ponlok Khmer (PKH) based in Preah Vihear
- 127) RACHANA
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