



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
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**Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia
to the United Nations Office and other
International Organisations at Geneva**

N. 2021/01/045

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and, with reference to the Office's joint communication No. AL KHM 10/2020 dated 10 December 2020, has the honour to transmit herewith to the OHCHR reply from the Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Cambodia as to the alleged disclosure of personal information of individuals infected with COVID-19.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia would be appreciated if the said information could be conveyed to its high destinations.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 12 January 2021



Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Geneva

**Response of Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Cambodia
to the joint communication of the Human Rights Council Special Procedures
No.AL KHM 10/2020 dated 10 December 2020**

The Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Cambodia would like to confirm that the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) clearly understands the importance of citizen's right to privacy and has committed to preserving the right to privacy for every individual.

In an effort to fight the COVID-19, the RGC has put strong effort to protect the right to privacy of individuals infected with COVID-19. Since the first case of COVID-19 was identified on 27 January 2020 in Cambodia, personal information of individuals infected with the virus has never been disclosed. In addition, the RGC has launched a campaign to strengthen public social solidarity with those affected directly or indirectly by COVID-19, and to prevent any stigma and discrimination against those contracting the virus and their families.

The decision to disclose personal information of individuals infected with the virus was made of necessity to curb the first COVID-19 community transmission related to the "28th November community event". At the beginning of the event, the Ministry of Health could not identify the source of transmission, and how far it had spread in the community. The public were fearful, and requested the Ministry of Health to disclose personal information of those infected with COVID-19 to help them identify their personal risk, and to turn up for testing or quarantine at a designated quarantine venue if they may have been in direct or indirect contact with the individuals infected with COVID-19 (as advised by the Ministry of Health).

The RGC believed that there was a need to take an immediate action to curb community transmission at the early stages of the pandemic rather than bearing the brunt force of a full-scale community outbreak.

To balance the right to privacy of individual against the right to survival of Cambodian citizens, foreigners, and diplomats living in Cambodia, the National Committee for Combating COVID-19 decided for the Ministry of Health to disclose personal information of individuals infected with COVID-19 to the public for only four days. Once the Ministry of Health better understood the nature of the community

transmission event, the disclosure of personal information of individuals affected with COVID-19 was ended.

The RGC continuously campaigns against the discrimination and stigma related to COVID-19, and has required employers to retain any employees infected with the virus. The RGC continues to provide financial support to individuals and families affected by COVID-19. The RGC also continues to closely monitor any discrimination and stigma that may emerge against those who were infected with the virus and will take responsive actions to prevent and resolve it.
