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ការិយាល័យនៃឧត្តមស្នងការទទួលបន្ទុកសិទ្ធិមនុស្សប្រចាំកម្ពុជា



STATEMENT OF THE CAMBODIA OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE 8 JUNE 1998 ATTACK ON THONG UY PANG,
EDITOR OF "KOH SANTEPHEAP" NEWSPAPER

The Cambodia Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights strongly deplores the attempted assassination on 8 June 1998 of Thong Uy Pang, editor and owner of Koh Santepheap newspaper. Mr. Uy Pang was clearly the target of this attack, in which he was shot twice. One of Mr. Uy Pang's bodyguards was also shot. We wish both victims a speedy recovery.

This is at least the third attack against staff of Koh Santepheap in recent years. In October 1997 two grenades were thrown at the home and office of Uy Pang. No one was injured, and no one was arrested.

In December 1994 Sao Chandara, 27 years of age, a journalist for Koh Santepheap, was murdered in Kompong Cham after gathering information about illegal logging in the province. Lt. Col. Sath Soeun was arrested and charged with the crime. In spite of strong evidence, Souen was acquitted by the court. Souen has since been implicated in other notorious murders, including the execution style killing of a minor, but in a noteworthy example of impunity no attempts have been made to prosecute him.

As in all other cases of attacks on journalists, the Cambodia Office urges a speedy and thorough investigation into this latest attack on a journalist. As there were many witnesses to this daylight attack, it should be possible to identify and arrest the perpetrators expeditiously. Failure to pursue this case and bring the perpetrators to justice will be understood by the Cambodian press as failure to defend the principle of freedom of expression. This freedom is critical to the success of the election process. The Cambodia Office is concerned, however, that since 1993 there has been only one arrest and there have been no successful prosecutions of the killers of five journalists or those who have carried out assassination attempts or attacks on newspaper offices. As always, the Cambodia Office and the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Human Rights in Cambodia stand ready to assist the relevant authorities in this investigation.

9 June 1998