

PRESS RELEASE

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTION COMMITTEE CALLS FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF TWO HUMAN RIGHTS WORKERS

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The Human Rights Action Committee, a coalition of 13 Cambodian NGOs including ADHOC, CCPCR, CHHRA, CKIMHDRA, GENEROUS, IDA, KKKA, KKKHRA, KKKHRDA, KID, LICADHO, TASK FORCE and VIGILANCE, strongly protests the detention of two human rights workers for their involvement in the monitoring of the demonstrations, that took place in K. Som town. On Saturday Dec. 19 and Sunday Dec. 20, hundreds of people protested the dumping of toxic industrial waste near the city.

On Monday December 21 at 10:15 AM, ten policemen picked up Kim Sen, LICADHO's coordinator in K.Som, from Deum Pring coffee shop and ordered him to follow them to the police station. The same day, at 10:40 AM, four policemen took Meas Minear from LICADHO's office to the same police station. Prior and during the questioning by the police, no arrests warrants were shown to the two human rights workers, violating their rights guaranteed by article 19 of the UNTAC law, and lawyers CDP and LAC, were not permitted to consult with them.

At approx. 3:30 PM, the two human rights workers and a market vendor were brought to the court and interrogated by the judge on their activities. At approx. 6:40 PM, the three were transferred to K.Som provincial prison. As of today, no formal charges have been laid.

At no time, did either of the two human rights workers participate in any form of criminal, political or illegal behavior. LICADHO's mandate has always been to document concerns from the people, assist victims of human rights violations and monitor public events. The Human Rights Action Committee is deeply concerned that the human rights workers are being targeted in an effort to undermine the work of human rights organizations and it calls for their immediate release.