



ក្រុមអ្នកតស៊ូមតិកម្ពុជា CAMBODIAN ADVOCACY TEAM

STATEMENT

"The Arrest of Mech Dara, an independent journalist, is another new Act of Repression on Press Freedom in Cambodia."

The **Cambodian Advocacy Group (CAT)** is increasingly concerned about the declining press freedom in Cambodia following the recent arrest of **Mr. Mech Dara**, an independent journalist. The **Hun Manet's** government must end such crackdowns and release **Mr. Mech Dara** immediately.

Mr. Mech Dara is a Cambodian professional journalist and is respected and valued by the national and international community of journalists. He was awarded the **TIP Hero Award** by the U.S. State Department in 2023 for his reporting, especially his efforts to expose human trafficking and online scams.

CAT President **Mr. Hong Lim** noted that the arrest of the journalist came after the US government sanctioned CPP Senator **Ly Yong Phat** for his involvement in human trafficking and online scams. "Recently, national and international media have uncovered the senator's business dealings with some of the Chinese criminals involved in these crimes."

The CAT observed and considered **Mech Dara's** arrest as a violation of national and international laws. Witnesses at the arrest scene confirmed that authorities did not present a court order at the time of the arrest.

Mr. Mech Dara was arrested on September 30, 2024 in Sre Ambel District, Koh Kong Province, while traveling with his family back to Phnom Penh.

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