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Press Release

Independent media websites blocked ahead of the election day

PHNOM PENH, 28 July 2018 – The Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM) expressed grave concern over the blocking of at least 17 websites by the Cambodian government ahead of the election day. Among the 17 websites which were blocked are prominent media institutions, such as CCIM's Voice of Democracy (VOD), Voice of America (VOA Khmer service), Radio Free Asia (RFA Khmer service) and the Phnom Penh Post newspaper.

CCIM contacted the Ministry of Information for explanation and was informed that the VOD website was not officially registered, and since the owner of the website is not clear, no advanced notification is possible. This explanation is unconvincing since the VOD website has a page that explains its history and being managed by CCIM. Also, the Ministry of Information has already contacted CCIM and inquired about the VOD website and its Facebook page. CCIM is legally registered with the Ministry of Interior since 2007.

The decision by the Cambodian government came to exist less than two days ahead of the election on July 29, 2018. It is very important to note that by the Friday night of July 27, 2018, the VOD website of www.vodhotnews.com could no longer be accessed.

Having been adhering to code of ethics and legal compliance, CCIM considers the blocking of the websites by the government as politically-motivated and counterproductive, given the critical circumstance that the people of Cambodia are in badly need of full access of independent media.

CCIM strongly believes that with the lack of independent media covering the election process, the status of transparent, free, and fair election is being questioned. Once the election cannot be free and fair, the legitimacy of a new government is absolutely doubtful.