

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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ICFTU Reaffirms its Support for Cambodian Trade Unionists Charged with Criticising Government

Brussels 19 December 2005 (ICFTU OnLine): At a meeting with Chea Mony on 19 December in Brussels, President of the Cambodian trade union centre FTUWKC, ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder pledged to intensify pressure on the Cambodian government to drop charges against Mony and other Cambodian union leaders of defamation against the country's government and inciting others to commit a crime. Rong Chhun, President of the Cambodia Independent Teacher's Association, was arrested and detained in October on similar charges, and arrest warrants have been issued against Man Nath, President of the Cambodian Independent Civil Servants' Association and Ear Channa, Deputy General Secretary of the Student Movement for Democracy. Man Nath and Ear Channa are currently in Thailand facing extradition to Cambodia. The charges were laid in response to a statement critical of the Cambodian government made by the four on the signing of a border agreement between Cambodia and Vietnam.

The trade union rights situation in Cambodia, detailed in the ICFTU's Annual Survey*, is extremely hostile, with repeated violations of organising and collective bargaining rights and harassment of union officials taking place over several years. Chea Vichea, previously President of the FTUWKC and brother of Chea Mony, and Ros Savannareth, a local trade union leader, were both murdered early in 2004. Despite an apparent effort by the government to find scapegoats for the murder of Vichea, the government has faced continued criticism for failing to ensure an effective investigation into the killings.

At the time of his visit to the ICFTU, Chea Mony also met with European Commission and European Parliament officials, as well as a number of European governments, to brief them on the continuing anti-union climate in Cambodia and seek international support for ensuring full respect for fundamental labour standards in the country.

Commenting on his meeting with Mony, Ryder called on the Cambodian authorities to drop the charges against the trade union and student leaders, and to bring an end to the anti-union hostility prevalent in the country. The ICFTU is raising the case with governments in several countries and the ILO in order to increase pressure on the Cambodian authorities.

Link to Annual Survey of violations of trade union rights, Cambodia section:
<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991222323&Language=EN>

The ICFTU represents 155 million workers through its 236 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. The ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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