

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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True justice is needed in Cambodia

Brussels, 04 October 2006 (ICFTU Online): The ICFTU has called today on the authorities of Cambodia to reopen the investigation into the murder of Chea Vichea, President of the Free Trade Union of the Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC). Chea was a fervent protector of the textile worker's rights and human rights in general.. The international trade union organisation also sent a formal complaint about the investigation to the UN's International Labour Organisation (ILO).

(link: <http://www.icftu.org/www/PDF/CFAComplaint2318CheaVichea2006.pdf>)

An appeal court hearing in the case of Chea Vichea's murder will be held on Friday 6 October in Cambodia. The ICFTU hopes that that the two men unfairly convicted of his murder will be released.

There are strong reasons to believe that the two men, Born Samnang and Sok Sam Oeun, who were convicted on 1 August 2005 to 20 year's imprisonment for the killing of Chea Vichea, are innocent. New information on the circumstances of the arrest of Born Samnang, recently collected in Cambodia by an ICFTU researcher, confirms this view.

There was clearly an absence of any initiative by the Government to reopen the investigation into the murder of Chea Vichea, despite requests by the Committee on the Freedom of Association and the Governing Body of the ILO. The government's inaction means impunity for the real killer (s), and sends a clear message to Cambodian workers - trade union membership and activity means that their safety is at risk.

The owner of the newspaper stand, in front of which Chea Vichea was killed, Ms Va Sothy, had clearly seen the killer and would have been able to recognise him. After having been intimidated by senior police officials, she was however too afraid to attend the trial. Ms Va Sothy has fled the country, but on 10 August she gave a four-page sworn statement on the killing of Chea Vichea. Her declaration starkly contrasts with the official investigation and verdict in the case. This has now been made available publicly.

The ICFTU represents 155 million workers in 241 affiliated organizations in 156 countries and territories: <http://www.icftu.org> ICFTU is also a member of Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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