

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/cambodia-murder-of-journalists-continues-to-11-09-2013,45163.html>

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Asia - Cambodia

Total impunity

## Murder of Journalists Continues to go Unpunished in Cambodia

11 September 2013

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The Cambodia Center for Independent Media (CCIM) and Reporters Without Borders (RWB) are deeply concerned about the climate of intimidation and violence facing journalists in Cambodia, which is leading to increasing self-censorship of the media. One year on from the brutal murder of journalist Mr. [Heng Serei Oudom](#), the failure to convict the perpetrators demonstrates that attacks against journalists continue to go unpunished. Guaranteeing media professionals the right to work free from the threat of violence is essential for the full implementation of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. It is the duty of the Royal Government of Cambodia and of society to create and maintain the conditions needed for these fundamental human rights to be enjoyed by all.

"We call on the Royal Government of Cambodia to immediately re-open the investigation and for those responsible to be found and punished. The Supreme Council of the Magistracy and General Prosecutor of the Appeal Court must intervene in order to find justice for the victim and his family, and to end the cycle of impunity that led to a travesty of Justice. An independent investigation body should be created to officially identify the authors of the dreadful crimes and sentence them", declared CCIM and RSF.

Mr. Heng Serei Oudom, a journalist for *the Vorakchun Khmer* newspaper, went missing on 09 September 2012. His mutilated body was found in the boot of his car in Ratanakiri Province on 11th September 2012. Before he was killed, Hang Serei Oudom had written a number of stories exposing the involvement of government officials and military police in illegal logging. On September 15 2012, police in Ratanakiri arrested Mr An Bunheng, a military police officer, and his wife Mrs. Srim Srey Vy for the murder. In August 28th 2013, Ratanakiri Provincial Court acquitted Mr An Bunheng and his wife, citing insufficient evidence.

Local rights group ADHOC investigated the murder scene and subsequent two trials of the accused and found a number of shortcomings in the proceedings. This included critical evidence not being included in the preliminary investigation, crucial phone records not being examined during the trial, questions over the autopsy of the body and use of forensic evidence, and the loss of crucial incriminatory evidence. The release of the suspects was widely expected in order to prevent exposure of more powerful figures allegedly involved.

"The Government is failing to protect the right of citizens to reliable information and the right of journalists to provide this information without fearing for their safety. The failure to bring perpetrators of this violent murder to justice leads to impunity. This further perpetuates the cycle of violence against journalists, including CCIM's own media workers and citizen journalists" said CCIM Executive Director, Mr Pa Ngoun Teang. "The justice system is failing to protect journalists who risk their lives to report on corruption and other illegal activities in Cambodia".

Hang Serei Oudom is the eleventh journalist to be murdered in Cambodia since 1994 and is now the eleventh journalist whose murder has been met with impunity.

*Crédit: Phnom Penh Post*

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