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Asia - Cambodia

Journalist's appeal

Court urged to overturn French journalist's "procuring" conviction

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Reporters Without Borders reiterates its support for French journalist **Daniel Lainé** and urges the Phnom Penh court that is to hear his appeal tomorrow to overturn his seven-year jail sentence on an absurd "procuring" charge.

Imposed in absentia by a Phnom Penh municipal court in 2010 in connection with a TV report on sex tourism that Lainé did in 2002, the sentence was confirmed by another court in a second trial in January 2013.

"A veteran journalist who received the World Press Award in 1991, Lainé has been the victim of a travesty of justice since 2006 and it is time this was brought to an end," said Benjamin Ismaïl, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk.

"His conviction *in absentia* in 2010, confirmed last year, and Cambodia's request to Interpol to issue a 'red notice' about him were nonsensical and constitute violations of freedom of information. We call on the appeal court judges to quash his prison sentence."

Lainé did report his report on sex tourism in Cambodia for "Le droit de savoir," a programme on the French TV station *TF1*. As soon as it was broadcast in 2003, the Cambodian authorities accused him of defaming the country and a French citizen who appeared in the report accused Lainé of defaming him personally.

During a subsequent visit to Cambodia in 2006, Lainé was placed [under house arrest](#), his passport was confiscated and he was threatened with imprisonment, prompting him to flee the country clandestinely.

In 2012, he was arrested while on a visit to Cuba, learning that Interpol had issued a red notice about him at Cambodia's request and that a Phnom Penh court had convicted him in absentia in 2010.

As he was never notified and was not represented, the trial constituted a complete violation of the right of defence and international standards on due process. The seven-year jail sentence was nonetheless confirmed last year.

Following [complaints](#) by Reporters Without Borders and the French prime minister, Interpol lifted the red notice in February 2013 at the behest of its Commission for the Control of Files (CCF), which concluded that Lainé was the victim of an arbitrary prosecution and had no serious charges to answer. Cambodia is [not the only country](#) to have tried to use an Interpol red notice to have a journalist arrested and extradited in order to silence him.

Cambodia is ranked 144th out of 180 countries in the 2014 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).
