



Mother Nature Cambodia

Phnom Penh, Tuesday, December 10, 2024

An open letter to the Cambodian people

Dear my beloved Cambodians,

It has now been 160 days since our esteemed environmental activist colleagues, **1) Ly Chan Dara Vuth, 2) Phuon Keo Rasmey, 3) Long Kuntha, 4) Thun Rotha, and 5) Yim Leanghi** were unjustly detained. They have been in custody since July 2, 2024, facing charges of plotting against the government and insulting the king, which carry prison sentences of 6 to 8 years. This constitutes a severe violation of their fundamental human rights and an abuse of power by the so-called "peace" regime.

These five individuals, aged between 23 and 36, have made great personal sacrifices by giving up their well-being, happiness, and youth to advocate for the protection of natural resources and the national interest. On July 2, the regime arrested them with brutal force, treating them as criminals, even though they are simply citizens who dared to speak out against environmental crimes, corruption, and governmental inaction.

They understood their rights and duties as Cambodian citizens and acted on the belief that they had an obligation to speak the truth, even when it challenged the powerful elites in the country.

To the Cambodian people, both inside and outside the country, we ask you to take note of three key points about the current situation:

1. Under the "peace" regime, Cambodia has become a state where the word "politics" is feared. In particular, the youth no longer engage in political discourse.
2. The country has transformed into an open-air prison, where citizens, especially the youth, are afraid to meet, discuss national issues, or voice opinions about the government.
3. The regime has imposed constant surveillance, arrests, and violent repression of human rights defenders. Those who defend natural resources face severe criminal charges, as the regime uses its power to silence them.

This situation is deeply troubling and disheartening.

To our beloved Cambodians, let us unite in solidarity and renew our commitment to the cause of justice. As the saying goes, **"Unity lives; division leads to death."**