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His Excellency Dr. Hang Chuon Naron,

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) representing 202 million workers from 163 countries, and the Education International (EI) representing 32 million teacher union members from 400 organisations in 170 countries, deplore the decision of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) to fire eleven teachers and education officers who are members of the Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association (CITA) for absenteeism. CITA is an affiliate of EI, and the ITUC via the Cambodian Confederation of Unions.

The eleven teachers and officers were taking leave from their posts between 2016 and 2017 with the approval of the MoEYS which, however refused to take them back between January and March this year. Instead of reinstating them to their original job, they were terminated for absenteeism. The eleven dismissed teachers and education officers are :

1. Rong Chhun, education officer at the Scientific Research Department of MoEYS.
2. Ly Dy, education staff at the Education Department of Preah Sihanoukville province
3. Vorng Ronny, education staff at the Education Department of Sihanoukville province
4. Kong Sivong, education officer at Kampong Cham province
5. Chhum Chan, teacher in Prey Veng province
6. Mut Mollea, teacher at Siem Reap Town High School
7. Pek Mab, Siem Reap provincial teachers' training College
8. Chan Sophea, Siem Reap Town High School
9. Hong SokChea, Hun Sen Tapenh Primary School, Siem Reap province
10. Yin Chhukroth, teacher in Kampot province
11. Khem Sitha, teacher in Battambang province

Under sub-degree No.50 (1999), civil servants on placement at other institutions are able to maintain their seniority (Article 4), and they should be reinstated to their original post at the end of the placement (Article 5). The Cambodian Law on Common Statute of Civil Servants allows termination only if it is preceded by an official inquiry by the relevant ministry, and representation of the concerned civil servant before the disciplinary council (Article 47). All the dismissed teachers and officers had applied for reinstatement after their leave and placements. None of them had received any warning. Nor were they given access to a disciplinary procedure. The decision of the MoEYS to terminate the teachers and education officers were illegal in violation of the laws.

The case of Rong Chhun, former President and now trade union consultant of CITA, is particularly alarming. His appointment to the National Election Committee (NEC) was made by the National Assembly in May 2015 and approved by the MoEYS. Rong Chhun resigned from the NEC on 21 November 2017 in protest of the dissolution of the opposition party, the CNRP by the Supreme Court and he applied to MoEYS for reinstatement on 3 January 2018. He was dismissed on 30 January using his belated application as an excuse although there is no time limit to reinstatement application stated in the law.

It is not a coincidence that Hong Sokchea, Pek Mab, Mut Mollea and Chan Sophea, members of the CNRP, were dismissed on the same day as Rong Chhun. We believe their terminations as well as the others were politically motivated.

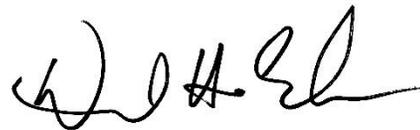
Discrimination “without distinction whatsoever” on all grounds including political opinion is strictly prohibited in the ILO Convention No.87 on freedom of association. The representative of the Cambodian government had stressed repeatedly before the ILO Committee of Application of Standards during the review on Convention No.87 in Cambodia in 2016 and 2017, that civil servants, including the teachers enjoyed the same trade union rights without distinctions. These promises made by the Cambodian government should not be tested by the MoEYS. We further believe that punishing teachers and trade union leaders for the political opinions they hold will only be detrimental to the political and social stability of Cambodia.

The ITUC and EI urge the MoEYS to strictly abide to the domestic laws and reinstate the eleven teachers and education officers to their original posts without delay. The right of the teachers in Cambodia to freedom of expression and association should be respected without undue interference.

Yours Sincerely,



Sharan Burrow  
General Secretary



David Edwards  
General Secretary

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