

16 August 2018

## **Cambodia: ADHOC human rights defenders summoned for trial**

On 12 August 2018, human rights defender **Nay Vanda** received a court summon dated 9 August 2018 issued by the Vice Prosecutor of the Phnom Penh Municipal Court, summoning him to attend a trial at 7:30am on 27 August 2018 at the Phnom Penh Municipal Court. Subsequently, human rights defender **Ny Chakrya** also received the same court summons.

These summons are related to charges brought against five human rights defenders on 2 May 2016. **Nay Vanda**, **Ny Sokha**, **Yi Soksan** and **Lim Mony** were charged with bribing a witness under Article 548 of the Criminal Code, and **Ny Chakrya** was charged as an accomplice to bribery of a witness in accordance with Articles 28 and 548 of the Criminal Code. If convicted, they face between five to ten years imprisonment. It is anticipated that the three human rights defenders who have not received the court summons will receive them in the coming days.

[The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association \(ADHOC\)](#) is a human rights organisation founded in December 1991 by a group of former political prisoners aiming to address violations of rights and freedoms. The organisation assists human rights victims and disseminates information on human rights, law and democracy to the public. **Lim Mony** is Senior Investigator within the organisation, **Ny Sokha** is the Head of Monitoring, while **Nay Vanda** and **Yi Soksan** serve as deputies of the latter. [Ny Chakrya](#), who is a former ADHOC staff member, was appointed Deputy Secretary-General of the National Election Committee (NEC), an independent agency that supervises national elections. In April 2017, the five human rights defenders were chosen as finalists for the Martin Ennals Award.

The human rights defenders were arrested on 28 April 2016 after they had been questioned by the Anti-Corruption Unit over allegations that they had instructed and bribed a salon worker, **Khom Chandaraty**, to deny an alleged affair with **Kem Sokha**, acting vice-president of the Cambodia National Rescue Party. They were held in arbitrary pre-trial detention for 14 months, and their requests for release on bail were repeatedly rejected. They were finally released on 29 June 2017 on bail. During the bail period, the HRDs were not allowed to leave the country or change their address, and remained under the court's supervision.

Front Line Defenders strongly reiterates its condemnation of the charges against **Ny Sokha**, **Nay Vanda**, **Yi Soksan**, **Lim Mony** and **Ny Chakrya**, which it believes to be directly linked to their peaceful and legitimate work in defence of human rights in Cambodia, and their assistance to an alleged victim of human rights abuse in a politically-sensitive case at a time of upcoming local and national elections.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Cambodia to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally drop all charges against the five human rights defenders;
2. Guarantee a fair trial in accordance with international standards;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Cambodia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.