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Cambodian Center for Human Rights

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For immediate release

Human Rights Council to review Cambodia's human rights record

PHNOM PENH, 30 Nov – Tomorrow, 1 December 2009, the Kingdom of Cambodia will be subject to the first Universal Periodic Review of its human rights record. The Universal Periodic Review, a process created in 2006 to review the human rights record of UN-member states, takes place in Geneva under the auspices of the 47-member United Nations Human Rights Council. The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) welcomes this opportunity to examine areas where the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) can adjust its policies and behaviour to ensure the protection of the human rights of those it was elected to serve.

The Universal Periodic Review, which takes place every four years, provides an opportunity for each State to outline the action taken in the preceding period to improve the human rights situation in the country and fulfil its human rights obligations. It also allows for civil society organizations to prepare submissions to the Human Rights Council on the state's human rights record. On 13 April 2009, a coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), coordinated by the Alliance for Freedom of Expression in Cambodia (AFEC) and assisted by the Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC), made a Joint Submission to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The Joint Submission, which included contributions by CCHR, raised serious concerns about the decline of freedom of expression and assembly in Cambodia in recent years. The submission, which concluded with a number of recommendations to help increase freedom of expression and assembly in Cambodia, has been incorporated into the stakeholder report compiled by the OHCHR. The full submission is available at www.cchrcambodia.org.

In the week leading up to the review, CCHR has been writing to Human Rights Council member states and other bodies with an interest in the review, including the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and Information, to highlight recent developments and the recommendations included in the Joint Submission. It implores member states of the Human Rights Council to use the Universal Periodic Review as an opportunity to hold the RGC to account for its frequent violations of its international and constitutional human rights obligations. CCHR hopes that the UPR Outcome Report reflects the concerns outlined in the Joint Submission and that the UPR Working Group finds ways to ensure that human rights have a proper place in Cambodia and are duly respected.

The review process, beginning at 3pm Central European Time (9pm local time), will be available for viewing live via webcast at <http://www.un.org/webcast/unhrc/>.

The three reports that will be used as the basis for Cambodia's review are available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx>.

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The Cambodian Center for Human Rights is a non-political, independent, non governmental organization which works to promote democracy and respect for human rights throughout Cambodia.

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