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Cambodian Center for Human Rights

PRESS RELEASE

Phnom Penh, 26 October 2009

**CCHR ISSUES REPORT ON SEPTEMBER ATTACK BY THAI MILITARY ON
CAMBODIAN LOGGERS**

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) today expresses its concern towards the ongoing mistreatment of the logging communities on the Thai- Cambodia border by Thai military, and specifically the recent events of 11 September 2009 that resulted in the tragic death of 16-year-old Yon Rith. Following an investigation into these events the CCHR issues an independent report titled *Oddar Meanchey, Kingdom of Cambodia - Legal Analysis of the Events of 11 September 2009 that resulted in the Death of Yon Rith and Severe Injury to Mao Kleung*. The story published in the *Phnom Penh Post* regarding the alleged killing by Thai military of Sim Bun Chen on Wednesday 21 October 2009 established that the murder of Yon Rith was not an isolated incident, rather, it is indicative of the pervasive mistreatment of Cambodian loggers operating on the Thai-Cambodia border. The CCHR commends the restraint shown by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) in its reaction to the killing of Yon Rith but beseeches it to follow the recommendations in our report in order to establish a precedent whereby these kind of actions on the part of the Thai military are not tolerated.

Following our independent investigation and assessment of the events of 11 September 2009, the CCHR concludes that it is extremely likely that Yon Rith was burnt alive by Thai military who have committed several breaches of international human rights law and principles as a result. The findings of our investigations as well as our recommendations are contained within our report which we today submit to the RGC for its urgent consideration regarding violations by the Kingdom of Thailand and its soldiers of Cambodian, Thai and international law. The Report is not intended to be a conclusive examination of the events leading to the death of Yon Rith rather it is starting point for further investigations into and analysis of those events by a bilateral, regional or international body. The Report is not confidential and will be made publicly available through our website - www.cchrcambodia.org.

The ongoing behaviour of Thai military on the roughly demarcated and highly contested Thai-Cambodian border are of serious concern to the CCHR. Thai investigations into the events of 11 September 2009 have inadequate and half-hearted. Moreover, the Thai Government continues to use Preah Vihear as the focal point of the nationalist fervour that brought it to power. The CCHR calls for an end to Thai military mistreatment of and attacks against Cambodian citizens and implores the RGC to follow the recommendations of our report so as to ensure justice for Yon Rith and his family and to guarantee that Cambodians living on the Thai border need no longer live in constant fear of their neighbours.

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