



Violent Crackdown at E-Garment

Phnom Penh – 7 February, 2013

The Community Legal Education Center (CLEC) toughly condemns the violent crackdown on the peaceful strike at E-Garment factory on Wednesday 6 February, 2013. At 10am, striking workers at the factory located in Kandal Province were attacked by 30 military police officers. Seven of the women workers were injured. One woman who is 5 months pregnant had to be taken to hospital for treatment.

Workers are members of the Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers' Democratic Union (C.CAWDU) and have been on strike since 24 January, 2013. Exercising their statutory right, they are demanding that the company follow the relevant Arbitration Council ruling to reinstate 33 union members that were illegally dismissed.

"We remind employers and duty-bearers that the right to strike is guaranteed in this country's *Labor Law*," said Tola Moeun, Head of CLEC Labor Program.

The Cambodian garment industry is now typified by exploitation, discrimination and violence and these events are indicative of the treatment of Cambodian garment workers and Cambodian women. For too long now institutions that were created to protect Cambodian women and citizens have been manipulated by powerful business interests resulting in illegitimate brutality, shootings and deaths.

Since 2010, employers, duty-bearers and sourcing brands at E-Garment have failed to remedy acts of discrimination and violence.

CLEC demands that all parties remedy the ongoing dispute immediately. Further, that military police implicated in violence are brought to justice and the culture of police brutality and impunity is brought to an end.

To international brands Mark & Spencer's, Esprit, Reitmans, Falmer Heritage and Okaidi, you cannot profit from poverty, exploitation and violence. CLEC will seek the supports of its international networks to demand open and transparent dialogue with the union to resolve the dispute immediately. Your obligations under your relevant CSR policies to your supply chain workers and to your customers have been seriously neglected. This is will not be tolerated.

For more information, please contact: +855 (0) 66 777 056 – Mr. Meoun Tola, Labor Rights Program