

## Thousands of monks and citizens march to celebrate International Human Rights Day in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, November 29, 2013: Over 500 Cambodian monks will march from Dec. 1 to Dec. 10 to celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> International Human Rights Day (IHRD). Joining them will be communities, associations, networks, federations, unions and NGOs, as well as residents of communities along the designated routes.

In addition to advocating for human rights, the participants will engage in Buddhist teachings on Buddhism and human rights, as well as question-and-answer sessions about human rights, including quizzes and readings of poems, along the way.

The multi-day march will feature five processions on five different National Roads, all of which will convene in front of the National Assembly on December 10. The processions will begin from the following provincial locations:

- National Road 1: Chantrea district downtown, Svay Rieng province
- National Road 3: Kampot City, Kampot province
- National Road 4: Om Liang Commune, Thkong district, Kompong Speu province
- National Road 5: Pursat city, Pursat province
- National Road 6: Kompong Thom city, Kompong Thom province

Organizers planned to have participants converge outside the National Assembly as the culminating event as a way to inform elected lawmakers about this year's IHRD theme, "Justice brings Peace!"

In anticipation of this year's IHRD march, Venerable Buth Bunteth, president of Independent Monk Network for Social Justice (IMNSJ), said, "I think that IHRD is an event for peace and justice for all kinds of people all over the world. Buddha taught people to make peace. We must find justice first through making a good deed to everyone in every community in the world."

Tim Malay, president of the Cambodian Youth Network (CYN), noted, "IHRD is a joyful and significant event. It marks our rights, our hopes for the future and our vision for our nation. At the same time, it will attract the attention of relevant people and show them that the human rights situation in Cambodia has worsened significantly over the last few years."

Recognizing IHRD as a venue to shed light on injustices in Cambodian society, Vorn Pao, president of the Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA), said, "Land and labour are the foundations of livelihood of people who are the core of society. When there is injustice in these sectors, other sectors suffer accordingly."

Also aware of the potential of IHRD to improve human rights in Cambodia, Yorm Bopha, a Boeung Kak activist recently released on bail, said, "The world needs to know that land activists and human rights defenders in Cambodia are increasingly becoming victims of state violence unjust imprisonment. During IHRD, the people will march to end this violence and injustice!"



IHRD is celebrated annually around the world on December 10 to commemorate human rights advocacy. It is also a day to remember the wide prevalence of human rights abuses, and the steps civil society, the government, international organizations and ordinary people must take to ensure that human rights are monitored and protected.

In line with this year's theme, "Justice brings Peace," organizers selected a logo that merges elements of religious and national flags, along with the image of the blue krama which has become the symbol of human rights defenders in Cambodia.

The media is warmly invited to participate in IHRD. Please contact person below for more information about the marches.

**For more information, please contact:**

- Mr. Yeng Virak, Executive Director of CLEC 012-801-235
- Mr. Am Sam Ath, Technical Supervisor of LICADHO 012-327-770