

## **Global Unions, International Human Rights and Workers' Rights Organizations Call for End to Politically Motivated Prosecution of Tola Moeun**

**March 13, 2018**

We, the undersigned global unions and international human rights and workers' rights organizations, call for the charges against Cambodian human rights defender Moeun Tola to be immediately dropped.

As reported on January 18, 2018, in the [Phnom Penh Post](#), prosecutors in Cambodia have sought criminal charges and an order for pre-trial detention against Tola and two other prominent civil society leaders, Pa Nguon Teang, an advocate for press freedom, and Venerable But Buntenh, an activist monk. Tola is the Executive Director of the Center for the Alliance of Labor and Human Rights ([CENTRAL](#)), and is a renowned supporter of labor rights in Cambodia.

On January 18, the Phnom Penh Court deputy prosecutor issued a preliminary charge for "breach of trust" against the three men, who were all members of the funeral committee for murdered activist Kem Ley. The deputy prosecutor also recommended that they be placed in pre-trial detention. None of the men were in the country at the time of the announcement; they risk imprisonment for an indefinite period if they return. If convicted, they face imprisonment for up to three years.

It is well known that Cambodia's courts are not independent, but rather are driven by the political interests of the ruling Cambodian People's Party. These charges constitute an attempt to silence and punish one of the country's leading independent voices for worker rights. As detailed in the [Phnom Penh Post](#), the pretext for the charges is a criminal complaint filed against Tola by Pich Sros, the leader of the obscure Cambodia Youth Party. Last year, Pich Sros filed the first complaint against the country's main opposition party, the Cambodia National Rescue Party, and its leader Kem Sokha, which led to Sokha's jailing and the party's dissolution by the courts.

The charges issued against Tola concern an unsubstantiated claim that he and the two other activists misappropriated funds raised for the funeral of Kem Ley, a well-known government critic who was assassinated in July 2016. Human Rights Watch has termed the charges "[politically motivated legal harassment](#)" and an example of the government targeting civil society activists. Moreover, multiple members of Kem Ley's own family have repeatedly stated that there is no basis for the allegations, and that Tola and the other two accused leaders never handled any of the funeral funds. Further, the complainant politician, Pich Sros, neither took part in the funeral nor has any connections to Kem Ley's family.

This case is emblematic of broader deterioration in the labor rights and human rights climate in Cambodia, where the government has closed down a number of independent media outlets, shut

down the National Democratic Institute (NDI), dissolved the Cambodia National Rescue Party and arrested its leader on “treason” charges, and engaged in politically motivated prosecutions against a number of human rights defenders and unionists.

**We, the undersigned organizations, are strongly calling upon the Cambodian government to respect fundamental human rights and to immediately drop the charges against Tola and his two co-defendants.**

We stand in solidarity with [35 Cambodian human rights organizations expressing similar concerns and call for action.](#)

Sincerely,



Building and Wood Worker's International



International Labor Rights Forum (USA)



Public Eye (Switzerland)



Focsiv (Italy)



Solidar Suisse (Switzerland)



The Cambodian Australian Federation (Australia)



Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (USA)



Centro Nuovo Modello di Sviluppo (Italy)



Pro Ethical Trade Finland/Eettisen Kanpan Poulesta (Finland)



International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations



BANGLADESH CENTER FOR WORKERS SOLIDARITY  
Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity (Bangladesh)



Public Services International



BBTK-SETCa (Belgium)



FEMNET (Germany)



ALTRAPO LAB (Spain)



Asia Floor Wage Alliance (India)



Die Gewerkschaft. Le Syndicat. Il Sindacato. UNiA (Switzerland)



Fair Action (Sweden)



International Domestic Workers Federation



United Students Against Sweatshops (USA)



Solidarity of Trade Union (Myanmar)

### Schone Kleren Campagne

Clean Clothes Campaign  
Schone Kleren Kampagne (Netherlands)



Human Rights Watch



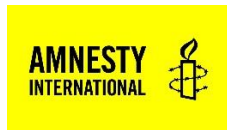
Maquila Solidarity Network (Canada)



The International Corporate Accountability Roundtable



Australian Council of Trade Unions (Australia)



Amnesty International



National Guestworker Alliance (USA)



Australia Asia Worker Links (Australia)



achACT (Belgium)

### Clean Clothes Campaign

Clean Clothes Campaign



Globalization Monitor (Hong Kong)

### NESRI NATIONAL ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RIGHTS INITIATIVE

National Economic and Social Rights Initiative



Human Rights Now (Japan)

### Setem

Setem (Spain)

### SOLIFONDS

Solifonds (Switzerland)



Women's Solidarity (Austria)

### NFTU Sri Lanka

National Free Trade Union (Sri Lanka)



FAIR/Campagna Abiti Puliti (Italy)



Jobs With Justice (USA)



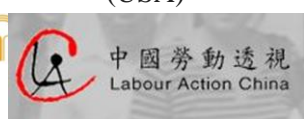
Coalition of Immokalee Workers (USA)



FOS (Belgium)

### people & planet

student action on world poverty and the environment  
People & Planet (UK)



Labour Action China (Hong Kong)



North South Initiative (Malaysia)



Labour Education and Service Network (Hong Kong)



Industrial Workers of the World - North American regional Admin. (USA)

Temiz Giysi Kampanyasi (Turkey)



Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehaviour (Hong Kong)



Korean House for International Solidarity (Korea)



Sedane Labour Resource Centre (LIPS) (Indonesia)



Tenaganita Women's Force (Malaysia)



Action Labour Rights (Myanmar)



Labour Education Foundation (Pakistan)



Schone Kleren Campaigne (Belgium N.)



MAP Foundation (Thailand)



Trade Union Rights Centre (Indonesia)



Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (Pakistan)



T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights (USA)



Future in Our Hands/Framtiden i våre hender (Norway)



ABVV-FGTB (Belgium)



Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangh (Bangladesh)



LBC-NVK (Belgium)



Clean Clothes Campaign Austria (Austria)



Christliche Initiative Romeo (Germany)



Yokohama Action Research (Japan)



Weltladen/Fair Trade Shops (Austria)



ACV-CSC (Belgium)



World Solidarity (Belgium)



NaZemi (Czech Republic)



Youth Labour Union 95 (Taiwan)



No Chains (Hong Kong)



Labour Behind the  
Label (United  
Kingdom)



Katholische  
Frauenbewegun  
Katolische  
Frauenbewegung AT  
(Austria)



Collectif Ethique sur  
L'Etiquette  
(representing 18  
French organizations)  
(France)

Informationsgruppe  
Lateinamerika AT  
(Austria)



Brücke – Le pont  
(Switzerland)



Gender Alliance for Development Cer  
Qendra Aleanca Gjimore për Zhvillim

The Gender Alliance  
for Development  
Centre (Albania)

Asian Transnational Corporations Monitoring Network

Defend Jobs Philippines (Philippines)

Samahan ng Manggagawang Kaagapay sa Pag unlad (Philippines)

Worker Empowerment (Hong Kong)