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FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

Vietnamese Police Confiscated the United Nations Documents and Detained a Khmer-Krom for Wearing a T-shirt with a SDGs Logo

Pennsauken, NJ, 26 June 2021 -- The Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation (KKF) condemns the unlawful actions of Vietnamese police of Tra Cu district, Tra Vinh province, for confiscating the UN documents and detaining a Khmer-Krom man wearing a T-shirt having the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) logo.

On May 25, 2021, one day before the world community commemorate the 76th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter, there was two shocking news that the Khmer-Krom from Tra Vinh province sharing on social media as follows:

- The Khmer-Krom shared a video of the Vietnamese police confiscated 150 booklets of the United Nations documents from a Khmer-Krom man, Mr. Thach Tha. Those booklets are: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP)
- A Khmer-Krom man, Mr. Thach Rine, was detained and interrogated from 8 am – 6 pm because he wore a T-shirt with a SDGs logo.

As a member state since 1977, Vietnam signed the ICCPR in 1982 and signed to adopt the United Nations DRIP in 2007. Vietnam should publish and distribute these crucial documents for the people in Vietnam to know their rights enshrined in these documents. The Khmer-Krom downloaded these documents, translated them into the Khmer language, and printed them to share with the Khmer-Krom community in the Mekong Delta. Instead of empowering the Khmer-Krom for doing this crucial work that the Vietnamese government should do, the Vietnamese police confiscated these documents.

The 2030 agenda for sustainable development has been implemented for six years in Vietnam. Most of the Khmer-Krom in the Mekong Delta doesn't know the existence of the SDGs. In recent months, the Khmer-Krom started learning about the SDGs from social media and printed the T-shirt with the SDGs logo surrounding the message in Khmer, translating to English as: "*Implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to ensure No Khmer-Krom are left behind*". Mr. Thach Rine faced reprisal because of wearing that T-Shirt and taking pictures with other Khmer-Krom sharing on social media.

In this regard, the Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation (KKF) urgently calls on the international community to urge the United Nations to ask Vietnam to:

- Comply with what Vietnam signed with the United Nations to respect and promote human rights as enshrined in the documents that Vietnam confiscated.
- Stop using reprisal against the Khmer-Krom who is merely wearing a T-Shirt with a SDGs logo and a message asking not to leave the Khmer-Krom behind while implementing the 2030 Agenda. The Khmer-Krom should have the rights to be included in implementing the SDGs.

