សហព័ន្ធខ្មែរកម្ពុជាក្រោម
KHMERS KAMPUCHEA-KROM FEDERATION
4315 50th Street NW, Suite 100, PMB 7005, Washington, DC 20016 – https://khmerkrom.org - info@khmerkrom.org - (202) 280-7362

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

Vietnamese Authorities Arrest Khmer-Krom Activists Amidst Accusations of Suppression of Fundamental Rights

WASHINGTON, **D.C., 31 July 2023** – On July 31, 2023, the Khmer-Krom activists Thach Cuong, To Hoang Chuong, and Danh Minh Quang were arrested by the Vietnamese authorities under the alleged crime of "Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State, lawful rights, and interests of organizations and/or citizens," as stated in Article 331 of the Vietnam Criminal Code.

The same day, two other Khmer-Krom activists, Danh Set and Tang Thuy, were also detained but later released. Moreover, Mr. Lam Vong and other Khmer-Krom activists are currently facing heavy surveillance by the Vietnamese authorities.

The Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation (KKF) strongly condemns Vietnam's use of Article 331 to criminalize Khmer-Krom activists for exercising their right to freedom of expression as indigenous peoples of the Mekong Delta. These activists merely stand up for their fundamental rights, and their arrest blatantly violates their rights to advocate for their community's interest.

We urgently call upon the Vietnamese government to immediately release Thach Cuong, To Hoang Chuong, and Danh Minh Quang without any condition. Vietnam must respect its obligations as a member of the Human Rights Council to uphold and protect the fundamental rights of its citizens, including those of the Khmer-Krom community.

Furthermore, we urge the United Nations and the international community to intervene and advocate for the release of these activists. Vietnam must genuinely fulfill its mission as a member of the Human Rights Council and ensure the protection of human rights for all its citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity or background.

The KKF remains committed to promoting the fundamental rights of the Khmer-Krom community and urges Vietnam to respect their cultural identity and freedom of expression as enshrined in the UN treaties that the country has ratified.