

## **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



The Cambodian Australian Federation (Australia)



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



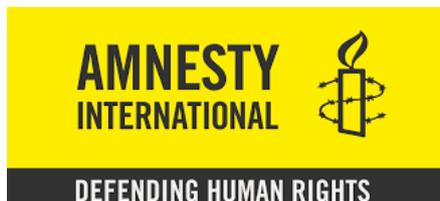
Public Services International



International Domestic Workers Federation



Human Rights Watch



Amnesty International



Clean Clothes Campaign



International Labor Rights Forum (USA)



Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (USA)



**BANGLADESH CENTER FOR  
WORKERS SOLIDARITY**

Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity (Bangladesh)



Asia Floor Wage Alliance (India)



United Students Against Sweatshops (USA)



Maquila Solidarity Network (Canada)

**NESRI** NATIONAL ECONOMIC &  
SOCIAL RIGHTS INITIATIVE

National Economic and Social Rights Initiative



National Guestworker Alliance (USA)



Globalization Monitor (Hong Kong)



Human Rights Now (Japan)



Jobs With Justice (USA)



Coalition of Immokalee Workers (USA)



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China Labour Bulletin (Hong Kong)



Labour Education and Service Network (Hong Kong)



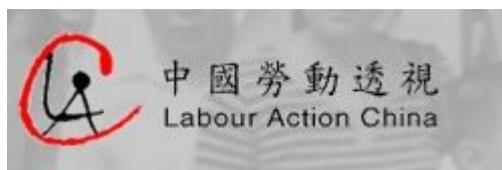
Industrial Workers of the World - North Americal regional Admin. (USA)



Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehaviour (Hong Kong)



Korean House for International Solidarity (Korea)



Labour Action China (Hong Kong)



Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangh (Bangladesh)



Sedane Labour Resource Centre (LIPS) (Indonesia)



Tenaganita Women's Force (Malaysia)



Action Labour Rights (Myanmar)



Labour Education Foundation (Pakistan)



Schone Kleren Campagne (Belgium N.)



MAP Foundation (Thailand)



Trade Union Rights Centre (Indonesia)



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



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



ABVV-FGTB (Belgium)



ACV-CSC Meta (Belgium)



LBC-NVK (Belgium)

**Clean  
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**Austria** 

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)



Labour Behind the Label (United Kingdom)



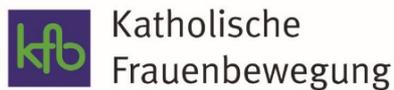
Youth Labour Union 95 (Taiwan)



Informationsgruppe Lateinamerika AT (Austria)



No Chains (Hong Kong)



Katholische Frauenbewegung AT (Austria)



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



Brücke – Le pont (Switzerland)



ALTRAPO LAB (Spain)



BBTK - SETCa (Belgium)



Public Eye (Switzerland)



Focsiv (Italy)



Solidar Suisse (Switzerland)



Pro Ethical Trade Finland/Eettisen Kanpan Poulesta (Finland)



Centro Nuovo Modello di Sviluppo (Italy)



FEMNET (Germany)



UNiA (Switzerland)



Fair Action (Sweden)



Solidarity of Trade Union (Myanmar)

**Schone Kleren  
Campagne**

Clean Clothes  
Campaign



Schone Kleren Kampagne (Netherlands)



The International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (USA)



Australian Council of Trade Unions (Australia)



Australia Asia Worker Links (Australia)



achACT (Belgium)



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**NFTU**  
**Sri Lanka**

National Free Trade Union (Sri Lanka)

***SOLIFONDS***

Solifonds (Switzerland)



FAIR/Campagna Abiti Puliti (Italy)



FOS (Belgium)



Women's Solidarity (Austria)



Temiz Giysi Kampanyasi (Turkey)



North South Initiative (Malaysia)



The Gender Alliance for Development Centre (Albania)



INKOTA-netzwerk e.V. (Germany)

Defend Jobs Philippines (Philippines)

Samahan ng Manggagawang Kaagapay sa Pag unlad (Philippines)

Worker Empowerment (Hong Kong)

Asian Transnational Corporations Monitoring Network

