



## **IUF and ITUC Statement on the Verdicts and Prison Sentences for LRSU leaders including LRSU President Chhim Sithar by Cambodia's Phnom Penh Court of First Instance**

The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), collectively representing over 200 million workers around the world, strongly condemn the guilty verdicts and prison sentences for 9 IUF affiliate LRSU leaders including President Chhim Sithar. We call on NagaCorp to use its considerable influence to persuade the Government of Cambodia to change course immediately, to release Sister Sithar and to drop all charges against her and the other LRSU leaders. We further call on NagaCorp to reinstate the terminated workers and members of LRSU and to negotiate in good faith with the union.

Nine members of the Labor Rights Supported Union of Khmer Employees of Nagaworld (LRSU), including LRSU President Chhim Sithar were convicted today for incitement to commit a felony under Articles 494 and 495 of the Cambodian Criminal Code after engaging in a peaceful strike at NagaWorld casino in Phnom Penh. 5 were given 1.5 year prison sentences, 3 were given 1 year suspended sentences, and LRSU President Chhim Sithar was given the maximum sentence of 2 years. Local NGO's have documented the regular use of these articles to charge and jail activists. The strike was in response to union-busting at NagaWorld casino where in April 2021, the company used the economic impacts of COVID-19 as an excuse to terminate 1,329 workers. 1,100 of these were LRSU members and activists, including the union's entire leadership. The strike followed all legal procedures and came after numerous attempts to negotiate in good faith with the company were rebuffed.

From December 31, 2021 to the end of the first week of January 2022, 29 striking workers were arrested. Nine were charged with incitement to commit a felony. One of the nine was released on bail, while the other eight remained in detention. The other workers were released on bail in March 2022. Since February 2022, Cambodian authorities have become more hostile and violent toward the strikers, attacking and harassing them, causing injuries such as black eyes, bloody noses, broken bones, and, in one case, a miscarriage. On April 3, LRSU president Chhim Sithar and other LRSU leaders received a death threat, left as a text on the phone of the brother of one of the representatives. LRSU alerted the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other embassies about the threat. On November 26, 2022, LRSU president Chhim Sithar was arrested and jailed at the Phnom Penh airport upon returning from the ITUC Congress in Melbourne, Australia. Authorities claimed she had breached her bail conditions by traveling abroad. She had, however, never been shown her bail conditions, and had previously traveled to Thailand without incident.

In March 2022, the IUF filed a complaint with the International Labour Organisation's Committee on Freedom of Association for violations of ILO Conventions 87 and 98. As a result, the ILO has issued a [formal decision](#) urging the Government of Cambodia to ensure that NagaCorp respect labour and trade union rights. In April 2023, the IUF also filed OECD complaints against NagaCorp's key bondholders for their failure to conduct due diligence under the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The IUF is launching [a new campaign website about the struggle at NagaWorld](#) today which gives the public a detailed history of this struggle and is available in English, Khmer and Chinese.