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Minority Rights Organization

(Human Rights Respect, Legal Protection, Peace & Development for Minorities)

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MIRO's 2013 Annual Report (incl. Jan 2014)

MIRO's Current Projects:

- Khmer Krom victims at Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, ECCC (or UN Khmer Rouge Tribunal)
- Women Empowerment / Human Rights Monitoring and Advocacy
- Statelessness of Khmer Krom and Vietnamese
- Khmer Krom Refugees / Asylum Seekers

Khmer Rouge Tribunal (KRT) Project:

Up to date, MIRO gathered more than 50 Victim Investigation Forms (VIFs) from Khmer Krom (KK) communities within three provinces for the cases 003 and 004. MIRO is closely cooperating with the ECCC, in particular with the Office of the Investigating Judges and the Victims Support Section (VSS).

MIRO staff attended at least 4 regional public forums organized by the VSS, both in the provinces and in Phnom Penh, to accompany KK clients to participate in the forums in order for them to understand about their case progress and to get information on the ECCC's proceedings, especially in regard to cases 002, 003 and 004.

Assisted international lawyer, Mahdev Mohan, to select and prepare a list of KK clients who should benefit from Testimonial Therapy (TT) as provided as a reparations measure in 2014.

Statelessness project work:

MIRO conducted two field-trip researches in Kampong Chhnang province in order to collect reliable information and data on the issue of statelessness in two Vietnamese communities (Kandal in early July 2013 and Chong Koh in Oct 2013). The report is currently written and analyzed, and will be circulated soon.

For this project, MIRO is collaborating with two human rights organizations, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and Kdei Karuna, in order to reduce the number of stateless persons in Cambodia. According to a decision taken between MIRO and JRS in Siem Reap in Dec 2013, MIRO has joined a proposal with JRS in collaboration with Kdei Karuna for conducting 10 field trip researches within a number of provinces where stateless ethnic Vietnamese were born and live today. The purpose of the research is to find out about the identification papers of these vulnerable groups.

KK Refugee and asylum seekers project/activities:

In November 2013, MIRO sent a letter to UNHCR in Bangkok urging its officials to reconsider over KK applications for their refugee status with UNHCR, since Cambodian government fails to honor its own word confirmed "KK has the same right as Khmer citizens while residing or entering the Kingdom of Cambodia".

Also from 9-12 November 2013, MIRO staff went to Thailand and interviewed 29 KK, who seek asylum and refugee status, in order to know about their situation after their applications were rejected by the

UNHCR. Following the trip, MIRO is writing a report entitled "Abandoned people" and it will be published in late January 2014.

Human rights investigation and monitoring:

Between Nov and Dec 2013, another 5 KK families in Takeo were granted identity documents such as family books and identity cards following the intervention of MIRO staff to the provincial authorities.

From August to September 2013, MIRO staff conducted an investigative research into the human rights situation of KK in the 4 provinces of Kandal, Takeo, Koh Kong and Sihanoukville. Afterwards, a written report titled "Marginalization of Women in Disadvantaged Communities" was prepared and publicly circulated.

On 5th January 2014, MIRO conducted an investigation into the case of 5 KK monks who were seriously beaten and arrested in front of Yakjin garment factory in Pur Senchey district in Phnom Penh during the garment workers protest and subsequently held for 12 hours at a military compound. On 10th of Jan, MIRO submitted a letter to the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights on Cambodia, Mr. Surya Subedi along with a short report, urging him to probe into that case. It should be put as a question to the Government of Cambodia at the UN Human Rights Council as a question.

Between 04 and 25 Jan 2014, MIRO conducted an investigation into cases of attacks on Vietnamese-run shops after the garment worker strikes in Pur Senchey district on 03 January 2014. After MIRO intervention, the cases were filed to the municipal court.

Press release and Media:

From 2013 up to date, MIRO has issued at least 5 statements and press releases on human rights violations/issues of Khmer Krom in Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand and stateless ethnic Vietnamese. All were covered and broadcasted by both the English and Khmer edition of The Cambodia Daily and The Phnom Penh Post newspaper, Radio Free Asia and the Voice of America. Some of the titles are:

- Khmer Krom's human rights situation in Cambodia and Vietnam 2013 (The Radio Free Asia - RFA, Dec 12, 2013)
- Khiev Samphan faces civil parties (The Phnom Penh Post, May 26, 2013)
- Advocacy Group Calls to End Mistreatment of Khmer Krom (The Cambodia Daily, 10 December 2013)
- UN Envoy Urged to Probe Arrest of Monks (The Cambodia Daily, 14 January 2014)
- More and More Khmer Krom Victims Wish to Become Civil Parties in Case 003 and 004 (The Cambodia Daily, Nov 28, 2013 & The Voice of America – VOA, Nov 29, 2013)

Board member/staff/interns:

Board Member:

The board members support MIRO with their specific expert knowledge. One of the board members, Judith Kunze, works for MIRO from 17 Dec 2013 to mid-March 2014. She is focusing on funding-raising and communicating with international organizations. The other members support MIRO with their specific expert knowledge.

Staff:

MIRO has two central staff and 5 provincial staff based in Takeo, Kampong Chhnang, Pursat and Battambang. All of them are working for MIRO as volunteers according to their willingness and capacities.

Internship:

Between August and December 2013, MIRO was supported by 4 interns/volunteers. They assisted in conducting investigative research within communities and writing reports on Khmer Krom human rights situation and Vietnamese statelessness in Cambodia. Furthermore, they also worked closely

with MIRO staff to look for donors by writing project proposals to be submitted to some potential donors and developing strategies for MIRO.

Funding situation:

Up to now, MIRO has no funding from any donors besides some small supports from private persons or charity to launch its current activities, though MIRO has dedicated a lot of its time to look for national and international donors by writing letters of inquiry, sending project proposals and or meeting in person. MIRO has also joined a proposal with JRS and Kdei Karuna to be submitted to the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for the statelessness issue in Cambodia.

MIRO website:

We are developing it with our board member Mr. Danh Hong's team during the weekends and hope to launch it soon.

Regional short course/workshop/meeting:

- From 4 – 8 Nov 2013, a MIRO staff was offered a full scholarship by the UNHCHR, Open Society Foundation and Tilburg University to participate in a short course on statelessness in Bangkok, Thailand. The gained knowledge is used within the frame of MIRO's activities.
- On 9 Nov 2013, MIRO staff attended an [annual] workshop on refugees organized by the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network, sharing Cambodia's statelessness issues and refugee situation in Thailand to this network. MIRO is a member of this network.
- On 8-9 Nov 2013, MIRO also met with lawyers from Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and Asylum Access Thailand (AAT) who represent KK refugees/asylum seekers at the UNHCR in Thailand. It provided the lawyers with an update of the human rights situation of KK in Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand.
- On 7 Nov 2013, MIRO met with UNHCR's officials in Bangkok (Ms Yoko Iwasa, senior regional durable solutions officer, Mr Nicholas Oakshott, regional protection officer (statelessness) and Ms Bongkot Napaumporn, protection Associate (statelessness)). MIRO provided them with the reports and update of the KK situation and Vietnamese statelessness in Cambodia. We are staying in touch via email contacts.

Prepared by:

ANG Chanrith and Suorn Butmao

13 January 2014