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One Hundred Thirteenth Congress
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February 10, 2014

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I write to register my grave concern regarding the Cambodian Supreme Court's recent acquittal of Eam Rattana, former chief of the Phnom Penh Municipal Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Police Unit, which reversed his December 2011 conviction for human trafficking and the prostitution of minors, for which he had been sentenced to seven years in prison.

It was troubling enough that former Major Rattana fled prosecution and remained at large throughout this timeframe. His problematic acquittal was reportedly rendered during an unannounced hearing of the Cambodian Supreme Court, without notice to any of the parties. This episode represents a new level of sanctioned impunity that will discourage and intimidate trafficking survivors, nongovernmental organizations, and officials working to combat the scourge of human trafficking in Cambodia.

Just as the original 2011 prosecution was cited by the Department as a hopeful sign in public testimony to Congress,¹ this troubling acquittal merits public comment by U.S. officials, and should be raised at the highest levels of the Cambodian government, not just with Cambodian officials responsible for human trafficking issues. Because this episode bears directly on Cambodia's compliance with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, I expect that it will merit discussion and impact Cambodia's tier ranking in the Department's upcoming, annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*.

¹ Testimony of Joseph Yun, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Oct. 27, 2011).

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I would appreciate hearing about developments in this case, including information regarding when – and at what levels – U.S. officials have conveyed concerns to the Government of Cambodia. Thank you very much for your attention to this serious human rights issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "E. Royce", is written over the typed name.

EDWARD R. ROYCE
Chairman