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## WRITE AN APPEAL LETTER!

We live in troubled times. Many communities are characterized by social, economic and political inequality and conflict. Meanwhile, the struggle for human rights continues, everywhere and all the time. We call those at the forefront of this struggle human rights defenders.

Human rights defenders document, expose and protest against discrimination, human rights violations, corruption, abuse of power and other violations. They demand respect and protection for their rights and the rights of others, and they hold authorities accountable for what they do – and for what they fail to do. The work done by human rights defenders is an absolute necessity for ensuring respect for and protection of all our rights.

During the period 2017-2019 Amnesty Sweden will take part in the global campaign BRAVE. The aim of this campaign is to change the situation for human rights defenders and contribute to strengthening their position so that they can work in a safe environment.

### METHOD

Letter writing has always been at the heart of Amnesty International's human rights campaigning and 55 years of human rights activism shows us that words really do have the power to change lives. The more people who get involved and write letters, the more powerful will be the impact on governments and authorities.

Authorities in Cambodia have previously responded to criticism by releasing prisoners or reducing sentences. Mass letter-writing around key dates is good for added pressure. These should call for the immediate and unconditional release of Tep Vanny and other imprisoned human rights defenders.



Imprisoned human rights defender Tep Vanny arrives for a court appearance.

## TEP VANNY

Tep Vanny is a human rights defender. For many years she has been fighting for land rights and against forced evictions in Cambodia. She has been arrested, threatened and assaulted on several occasions. At the moment she is serving a two-and-a-half year prison sentence for taking part in a peaceful protest near the Prime Minister's house in 2013. Amnesty International demands that Tep be released immediately and be allowed to do her work in peace.

You can show your support for a human rights defender by writing a letter to the Prime Minister of Cambodia, to urge him to immediately and unconditionally release Tep Vanny.

### Amnesty International demands:

- Tep Vanny's immediate and unconditional release, that all charges be dropped and the end of all criminal investigations against her.
- Authorities to publicly condemn and order an end to harassment and violence against human rights defenders, including unwarranted legal action and imprisonment.
- Defending human rights is not a crime.

## PREPARATIONS

- Read this [article](#) concerning the case.

## WRITING YOUR LETTER

1. Write a first draft of your letter, it should be no longer than one typed page. The letter should contain the following:

- The proper greeting to the politician you are addressing. When addressing the Prime Minister of Cambodia you should start with Your Excellency.
- An argumentative text calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Tep Vanny. Make your argument and convince the Prime Minister that he should listen to you.
- Write your signature with your name and home town.

§ "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

**Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

2. Switch drafts with someone else and read it. Imagine yourself being a politician receiving this letter. Would it appear serious? Are the arguments valid? Is the tone properly formal?

3. Improve and finish the letter, using the advice you were just given. Keep in mind: This is a real letter, being sent to the Prime Minister in Cambodia. Avoid using slang, disrespectful language or other informalities.

### **Primary target**

The Prime Minister of Cambodia, the one person with the power to end the harassment and violence against human rights defenders, including unwarranted legal action and imprisonment.

Prime Minister  
H.E. Samdech Hun Sen  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Jok Dimitrov Boulevard  
Phnom Penh  
Cambodia