



# CAMBODIA-AMERICA ALLIANCE

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## “Reformer and Martyr: Dr. Kem Ley”

On this day, July 10<sup>th</sup>, the Kingdom and Khmer communities around the world has been devastated by the senseless killing of a reformer and independent mind, Dr. Kem Ley. Our organization and members send our most sincere condolences and prayers to the Kem family as we all try to grasp with his murder. This tragic news marks the second day where we’ve lost influential people who’ve help shaped our modern history as Sydney H. Schanberg, the journalist who chronicled the Khmer Rouge reign of terror and depicted in the Killing Fields movie, passed away on July 9<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Kem Ley was an extraordinary gentleman whose exceptional work for the Kingdom spans across three decades. His UNICEF and UNAIDS sponsored work was critical in fighting the AIDS epidemic that once plagued Cambodia. He is credited with subsequent research that has alleviated drug abuse and human sex trafficking. His latest work encouraged good governance and promoted human rights that is much needed in the Kingdom. Dr. Kem committed the latter portion of his career to spur reforms that would inspire Cambodia’s youths to engage in community and political affairs.

The Global Witness report on Hun Sen’s family business interest was recently discussed by Dr. Kem Ley on Radio Free Asia where he critically analyzed conflicts of interest and highlighted the abuse of power by the ruling party. His interview subsequently reinforced the issues with illegal land grabs, government abuse and tainted judiciary that facilitated institutionalized corruption. Dr. Kem was very vocal and fearless against Hun Sen’s totalitarian regime; making his commitment and courage virtuous characteristics shared by Chea Vichea, Chut Wutty and Oknha Seun Kuy.

Justice is demanded and must be found as this was not the first time coincidental deaths occurred nearing election time. This brand of violence has all been witnessed many times before without closure, only diversions. His killing will have the opposite effect of what the perpetrators intended because it has only strengthened and unified reformers more than tyrants can ever imagine. We implore the Khmer people to stand tall and remain vigilant as we grieve, but know you’re not abandoned. Cambodia America Alliance stands by you and the many people who fight for a safer and democratic Cambodia. Dr. Kem Ley, you’re a true visionary, a real reformer and now a martyr. May you rest in peace Sir. Your integrity and fighting spirit lives on in each and every one of us. We will not rest and we will never yield until Cambodia secure its freedom.

*“Everybody knows it. Even the children know everything is in the hands of the strongman.”*

*Dr. Kem Ley, Cambodia Daily July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016*