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KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
ជាតិ សាសនា ព្រះមហាក្សត្រ
NATION RELIGION KING

ក្រសួងកសិកម្ម រុក្ខាប្រមាញ់ និងនេសាទ
 Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

PRESS RELEASE

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is pleased to announce that Mr. Kry Masphal, Director of the Department of Wildlife and Biodiversity of the Forestry Administration, has been acquitted by a Florida court on March 22, 2024, in a case alleging his involvement in the transportation of wild long-tailed macaques into the United States.

On November 16, 2022, Mr. Kry Masphal was detained by US authorities at John F. Kennedy International Airport while in transit to the U.N. Meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in Panama. The detention by prosecutors and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has separated him from his family and homeland for over 16 months.

Throughout this period, the Royal Government of Cambodia, spanning from the sixth to the seventh mandate, worked tirelessly to pursue justice for our official. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries would like to express our sincere gratitude to the esteemed leaders of the Royal Government of Cambodia, Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen and Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet, who consistently prioritize the welfare of civil servants.

We also appreciate the support from various ministries and stakeholders, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Justice, the Cambodian Ambassadors to Washington D.C., and Cambodian Ambassador to New York, as well as their colleagues, lawyers, and the legal team who have contributed to the professional support and advocacy of justice for Cambodian officials.

The Ministry wishes to inform both the public and the media that in the case of Mr. Kry Masphal, we have refrained from making any statements to the media to ensure the integrity of the trial process, allowing it to proceed impartially without external pressures. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries collaborated closely with Mr. Masphal's US legal representatives, providing relevant evidence to the court to challenge the prosecution's case and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for their misrepresentation of Cambodian officials. This misrepresentation was based on evidence obtained via improper investigations, concealed from Cambodian authorities, and contravening normal practices of cross-border law enforcement norms.

The allegations against Cambodia regarding the long-tailed macaque trade had no evidence and relied on unfounded assertions disseminated by certain individuals or NGO personnel, disseminated through local unprofessional media and Western mainstream media, aiming to discredit Cambodian officials and influence the court decision.

Thus far, all exported long-tailed macaques from Cambodia have adhered strictly to international laws and conventions. Despite assertions from Cambodian authorities regarding legal documents, allegations about the long-tailed macaque trade persist.

The U.S. court's decision to dismiss the charges against Mr. Kry Masphal represents a fair judgment, and affirms that Cambodian officials have consistently upheld laws, regulations, and international conventions.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries congratulates Mr. Kry Masphal on receiving justice from a US court. Concurrently, we denounce the actions of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which have overstepped their authority and failed to adhere to international best practices in enforcing cross-border laws.

The efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia to pursue justice for its official underscore the principle that honorable Cambodian officials must not be subjected to abuse under any circumstances.

