



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING**



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**Statement of the Spokesperson of
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in its most unequivocal terms, rejects the assertion made by several foreign media and institutions that led the public to believe that Cambodia may have allowed passengers carrier of the virus to leave the Westerdam cruise ship which increased global coronavirus spread. Such hasty, unsubstantiated, unprofessional and accusatory driven articles and statements have spurred unnecessary fears and confusion among the public regarding the spread of the virus COVID-19, caused prejudicial discrimination on the passengers of the Westerdam Cruise ship, and aimed ill-intently to devalue Cambodian humanitarian gesture and health competence.

Acting with the utmost compliance with the international health regulations and in full concertation with health authorities of global stature like the World Health Organization, the Institut Pasteur du Cambodge (IPC) and the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Cambodian Ministry of Health have tested and cleared all 2,257 passengers and crew members of the Westerdam Cruise ship of the COVID-19. Concerning the 83-year-old American woman who initially was supposedly tested positive for the virus in Malaysia, the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a globally recognized health authority has rejected the result of these tests and has affirmed through its spokesperson that : "I have confirmed that all the passengers were tested, and they have come negative for coronavirus, including the person who initially tested positive". Moreover, in line with the CDC findings, the Australia Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC) has decided on 21 February 2020 to remove the 14 days of self-isolation restrictions upon their return to Australia.



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation reiterates Cambodia's firm stance vis-à-vis its decision to allow the Westerdam cruise ship to dock in its port so as to enable safe passage for its passengers to their respective home country destination. Its actions were motivated solely by sheer compassion, a sense humanity, a profound conviction on the value of international solidarity and responsibility but nevertheless grounded on sound medical and scientific prudence. For a matter as serious as this global health threat, the Ministry rejects such irresponsible and unethical journalism in as much as some foreign official statement which misled the public, exacerbated the fear, cause unnecessary burden and panic, and tarnished the image of Cambodia.

Phnom Penh, 24 February 2020.

