

FACT SHEET: FORCED EVICTIONS IN CAMBODIA

Snapshot: This fact sheet builds upon previous fact sheets released by CCHR in 2020, 2021, and 2023. It focuses on forced evictions in Cambodia since October 2023; recalls the human rights obligations requiring both States and businesses to protect citizens against forced evictions; and provides tangible recommendations to the Royal Government of Cambodia (“RGC”) to protect housing and land rights.

1. Introduction

Cambodia has a long history of forced evictions, with a dramatic spike in land disputes over the past decades due to economic development land grants, a fractured land registration system, lack of formal tenure security, and weak rule of law. While there is no official data available, an estimated **400,000 Cambodians** were forcibly evicted between 2003 and 2012,¹ with numbers now expected to be much higher. A 2020 report from Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (STT) showed that **nearly 10,000 families (roughly 40,000 people)** had been evicted without due process since the 1980s in Phnom Penh alone.²

Forced evictions often force victims into homelessness or impede them from earning a livelihood. They **intensify existing inequalities**, and invariably **affect poor and marginalized communities**, pushing the most vulnerable further into poverty. Previous fact sheets published by the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”) in 2020 and 2021 showed that forced evictions **continued during the COVID-19 pandemic**,³ despite the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing’s call for a global moratorium on evictions during that period.⁴ In October 2023, another fact sheet documented more cases of forced evictions since COVID-19 restrictions were lifted in late 2021.⁵

This fact sheet will first outline the human rights obligations that require both States and businesses to protect individuals and communities from forced evictions. It will then review recent cases of forced evictions in Cambodia since October 2023 and provide concrete recommendations to the RGC to enhance respect for land and housing rights and prevent forced evictions in the country.

a. Definition

What are forced evictions?

A forced eviction is the “**permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection.**”

Committee on Social and Cultural Rights, (General comment No 7, E/1998/22, 1997)

¹ Faine Greenwood, “Cambodia evictions continue unchecked.” ([Global Post](#), 22 January 2012).

² Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (“STT”), “[Eviction and Relocation](#).” (June 2020).

³ CCHR, “[Factsheet: Forced Evictions in Cambodia](#).” (October 2020); CCHR, “[Fact sheet on forced evictions in Cambodia during COVID-19, in 2021](#).” (October 2021).

⁴ OHCHR, “[Ban evictions during COVID-19 pandemic, UN expert urges](#).” (18 August 2020).

⁵ CCHR, “[Factsheet: Forced Evictions in Cambodia](#).” (October 2023).

Forced evictions constitute a **gross violation** of the right to adequate housing, as well as broad range of other internationally recognized rights, including the right to security of person, and the rights of indigenous peoples to their traditional lands and territories.⁶ Under international law, forced evictions are only permissible in very limited and narrow circumstances, and **must be fully justifiable and authorized by law**. Full **legal recourse and remedies** must also be available to those affected.⁷

It is the **responsibility of the State to protect against forced evictions**, and to ensure that evictions are permissible under human rights law and carried out in the appropriate manner. This includes considering alternatives, following due process, and **respecting the rights to information, meaningful consultation, and free, prior, and informed consent** of affected citizens. The State must also take all necessary steps to **minimize the impact of evictions** so they do not result in homelessness,⁸ and to ensure that evicted citizens are provided with **adequate compensation** in advance and appropriate remedies.⁹

States are also required to protect against forced evictions carried out by third parties; while **businesses are under an obligation to respect human rights**, including to not forcibly evict individuals.¹⁰ It is also important to recall that protection against forced evictions is **not dependent on a person's land tenure status**, and extends to **all individuals**, including those living in informal settlements, in rural areas, and renters.¹¹

b. Legal framework

Protections against forced evictions are enshrined in legally binding treaties ratified by Cambodia,¹² which are incorporated directly into domestic law through article 31 of the Cambodian Constitution. For instance, article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (“ICESCR”) recognizes the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, including **adequate housing**; while article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (“ICCPR”) states that no one shall be subjected to **arbitrary or unlawful interference with his home**.

Cambodian law also provides for numerous protections against forced evictions. The Constitution and the Land Law 2001 both provide that land/property expropriation can only occur in the public interest, with the requirement that **fair and just compensation be paid in advance**.¹³ The Land Law further provides possession rights and rights to request land titles in certain circumstances,¹⁴ and contains provisions protecting against forced eviction of private owners and occupants.¹⁵ The 2010 Law on Expropriation also outlines requirements for fair compensation.

In 2002, the RGC committed to “*clarify and record ownership and other rights [...] in order to strengthen land*

⁶ OHCHR, “Forced Evictions Factsheet No. 25/Rev 1.” (OHCHR, 2015), p 5.

⁷ ICESCR, “General comment No.7 on the right to adequate housing:forced evictions.” (ICESCR, 1997), UN Doc E/1998/22, para. 11.

⁸ *Ibid*, para. 16.

⁹ For examples of appropriate remedies, see OHCHR, “Land and Human Rights Standards and Applications.” (OHCHR, 2015), p. 29.

¹⁰ OHCHR, “Land and Human Rights Standards and Applications”, (n 6) p. 81.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 7.

¹² For more information on the human rights and obligations of states under international law pertaining to forced evictions, please see Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, “Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Displacement” (OHCHR, 2007) UN Doc A/HRC/4/18.

¹³ The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia 1993, Article 44, See also: Land Law 2001, Art 5.

¹⁴ For example, Art 30 of the Land Law 2001 provides rights to request definitive land title for those who have had peaceful, undisputed occupation of land or housing for more than five years prior to the promulgation of the law.

¹⁵ See Land Law 2001, article 254.

*tenure security, improve the efficiency and reliability of land markets, and protect social harmony by preventing or resolving land disputes.”*¹⁶ The RGC has also developed legal, policy, and institutional frameworks to implement the 2001 Land Law. These frameworks recognize and provide for **important safeguards** to protect land tenure, as well as the possession and ownership rights of Cambodian citizens, including protection against forced evictions. Under these policies, **forced evictions are illegal** and resettlement can only be undertaken as a measure of last resort.¹⁷

2. Recent cases of forced evictions in Cambodia

The RGC has launched a **large-scale titling program to formalize tenure rights** across Cambodia, a move expected to eventually decrease the number of forced evictions. The previous administration surveyed and registered over 7.7 million plots, **issuing around seven million land titles**. These efforts have continued under Prime Minister Hun Manet, with two million plots registered and nearly 590,000 titles issued as of 22 August 2024. On that date, Hun Manet pledged an estimated USD 100 million to survey an additional 2.5 million plots and **complete the titling drive by 2025**, with the aim of significantly reducing or even eliminating land disputes.¹⁸

Although indigenous people have been historically impacted by forced evictions due to the granting of economic land concessions and encroachment on their traditional lands by economic actors, **little progress has been made in providing them with collective land titles (CLTs)**. As of July 2024, only 43 out of Cambodia’s 458 indigenous communities had received CLTs.¹⁹

Despite the progress made in issuing land titles, evictions have shown no sign of abating since October 2023. From 27 October 2023 to 5 September 2024 (“the Reporting Period”), CCHR’s Protecting Fundamental Freedoms, Land Rights, and Natural Resources (PFFLN) Project registered a total of **368 media articles related to 40 cases of forced evictions**—8 involving actual evictions and 32 involving threats of eviction. These 40 cases **affected 22,108 families who were either evicted or facing eviction** across the country. The figures presented in this paragraph encompass both new cases and cases that began before the Reporting Period and continued to develop during it. Therefore, they do not represent the exact number of people evicted or facing eviction during the Reporting Period only.

The recent forced evictions recorded by CCHR have been marked by the **use of force, legal threats, intimidation, property destruction, inadequate compensation packages**, and a general **lack of consultation** with the communities affected. The main victims were members of poor communities, farmers, and other vulnerable groups. In one instance, a prominent **human rights defender was also detained** for sharing the challenges faced by forced eviction victims. Below are three of the most high-profile cases documented during the Reporting Period.

a. Angkor Relocation Program Sparks Concerns Over Potential Mass Evictions

¹⁶ “Eviction and Resettlement in Cambodia, Human Costs, Impacts and Solutions.” (OHCHR, 2012), page 2.

¹⁷ This principle was reiterated by His Excellency Mr. Im Chhun Lim, the Senior Minister in charge of the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, when he received the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, on 29 October 2010. OHCHR, “Eviction and Resettlement in Cambodia, Human Costs, Impacts and Solution.” 2012, page 2.

¹⁸ Niem Chheng, “Civil society praises plan to complete \$100M land survey by 2025.” (*Phnom Penh Post*, 27 August 2024).

¹⁹ The NGO Forum on Cambodia, via [Facebook](#), 19 July 2024.

In the second half of 2022, authorities began **relocating over 10,000 families** from Siem Reap's Angkor Archaeological Park to Banteay Srei district's Run Ta Ek Commune, some 30 kilometers away. They said the relocations were necessary to protect the location's UNESCO World Heritage status, **portraying them as voluntary**.²⁰ However, research published by Amnesty International in March 2023 revealed a lack of "notice prior to evictions, and genuine consultation with the affected communities on the eviction and resettlement process."²¹ As of April 2024, about **5,000 families had already been relocated**, with 5,000 others still due to be moved.²²

On 14 November 2023, a report by Amnesty found that many families were **pressured to leave following intimidation, harassment, threats and acts of violence**. Amnesty also stressed that Run Ta Ek was prone to floods and lacked necessary infrastructure. Families who relocated also reported facing food shortages after losing their main source of income at Angkor.²³ In response, UNESCO **urged the RGC to put corrective measures in place** and instructed Cambodia to address Amnesty's allegations by 1 February 2024.²⁴

The RGC **strongly rejected Amnesty's conclusions**, arguing that it was moving "squatters" involved in the "illegal occupation of heritage land." Amnesty countered by highlighting that several relocated families reported having lived on the Angkor site **for generations**.²⁵ On 8 December 2023, Prime Minister Hun Manet pledged to turn Run Ta Ek and Peak Sneng, another resettlement site, into model towns.²⁶ In March 2024, an Amnesty researcher said conditions in Run Ta Ek had improved, but noted that authorities had **not** addressed the issues of indebtedness and loss of income among residents.²⁷ In April 2024, 70% of planned infrastructure development in Run Ta Ek had been completed.²⁸ On 24 July 2024, the World Heritage Committee recommended that an **inspection team** visit the disputed site in Angkor Archaeological Park, citing concerns "about third-party reports concerning **possible forced population displacements**."²⁹

b. Boeung Tamok Families Forced to Accept Unfair Compensation Packages

In 2016, the RGC declared Boeung Tamok, Phnom Penh's biggest lake, as state property.³⁰ It subsequently parceled out plots of the lake, whose shores used to be **home to around 319 urban poor families**,³¹ to well-connected elites for real estate projects.³² On 11 June 2020, the Prek Pnov District authorities and police **forcibly evicted around 100 local families** without notice or consultation, demolishing and/or burning down their houses in the process.³³ On 28 February 2022, officials demolished 11 houses after their owners **refused**

²⁰ Khuon Narim, Jack Brook, "No Choice": Forced Angkor Evictions Portrayed as Voluntary to UNESCO" ([Cambodia News](#), 4 April 2023)

²¹ Amnesty International, "[Cambodia: Halt 'mass forced evictions' at World Heritage site Angkor Wat](#)" (31 March 2023)

²² David Rising, "Cambodia's relocation of people from UNESCO site raises concerns" ([AP](#), 11 April 2024)

²³ Amnesty International, "[Cambodia: 'Nobody wants to leave their home': mass forced evictions at Cambodia's UNESCO world heritage site of Angkor](#)" (14 November 2023)

²⁴ UNESCO, "[UNESCO's reaction to Amnesty International's report on Angkor](#)" (15 November 2023)

²⁵ David Rising, "Cambodia defends family relocations around the famous Angkor Wat temple complex" ([AP](#), 4 March 2024)

²⁶ AKP, "Run Taek area to become a city in the near future" ([Khmer Times](#), 8 December 2023)

²⁷ David Rising, "Cambodia defends family relocations around the famous Angkor Wat temple complex" ([AP](#), 4 March 2024)

²⁸ Torn Vibol, "Govt to transform Run Ta Ek, Peak Sneng into model towns" ([Khmer Times](#), 22 April 2024)

²⁹ RFA Khmer, "UNESCO to send inspection team to Cambodia's Angkor temple complex" ([RFA](#), 26 July 2024)

³⁰ STT Organization, "[Boeung Tamok or Boeung Kobsrov - Facts and Figures #43](#)" (April 2021)

³¹ STT Organization, "[The Last Lakes - Facts and Figures #40](#)" (December 2019)

³² Kamnotra, "[Oknha With Ties to Prime Minister's Family Allocated Boeng Tamok Land](#)" (13 July 2023)

³³ STT Organization, "[Sahmakum Teang Tnaut \(STT\) calls for an end to all evictions during the Covid-19 pandemic and releases new research Evictions and Relocations](#)" (n.d.)

below-market relocation offers. An affected resident said the **compensation packages were inadequate** but added that 12 families had accepted them out of fear due to the authorities' intimidation.³⁴

On 18 December 2023, authorities **destroyed a food stall belonging** to a Samrong Tbong resident Ms. Kong Toeur. The move triggered a clash during which several residents who scrambled to help her sustained minor injuries.³⁵ On 15 January 2024, Kong Toeur, four of her relatives, and two neighbors **received court summonses** ordering them to appear at the Phnom Penh Municipal Court for questioning in connection with this incident.³⁶ On 27 February 2024, locals staged another protest to try and block machinery from destroying property, leading to a scuffle with local officials.³⁷ As of early 2024, around 200 local families were still asking authorities to set aside four hectares from the development projects so they could continue to live in their area.³⁸ Over **ten residents had also been issued court summons** for opposing evictions or property destruction by local authorities.³⁹

On 18 March 2024, around 40 community members marched to the Royal Palace to submit a petition seeking the intervention of the King to help resolve this case. Palace officials argued that the Royal Palace does not accept such petitions and suggested that the villagers submit theirs to the City Hall or the Prime Minister's Office. Community representatives said they had **already exhausted all available avenues**, without results.⁴⁰ On 21 August 2024, *CamboJA News* reported that the remaining households living on the disputed land **had abandoned their fight for fair compensation**. Many residents said they feel **coerced into accepting an unjust settlement** to avoid further prosecution, citing legal charges against community members and intimidation from local authorities.⁴¹

c. Over 300 Families Forcibly Evicted in Preah Vihear Province

On 6 March 2024, authorities **burned down homes and evicted residents** from land that was allocated to the Seladamex company in Preah Vihear province's Kulen District. They used tear gas and fired warning shots to disperse around 130 locals who tried to stop them.⁴² Around 40 villagers were arrested.⁴³ According to information obtained by CCHR, **over 300 families from three villages were evicted**, both well-established residents and people from other provinces who settled on the disputed land from 2012 to 2017. These newcomers were reportedly given verbal assurances of their right to settle by unidentified individuals or bought plots from brokers who appear to have scammed them; they do not have official land titles.

³⁴ Teng Yalirozy, "Authorities Evict Lakeside Residents of Boeung Tamok" (*Cambodianess*, 28 February 2022)

³⁵ RFA Khmer, "Food vendors furious after Phnom Penh police destroy stalls in land clash" (*RFA*, 20 December 2023)

³⁶ Phon Sothyroth, "Seven Boeung Tamok Residents Sued For Stopping The Demolition of A Vegetable Stall" (*CamboJA News*, 17 January 2024)

³⁷ RFA Khmer, "Mud-soaked residents scuffle with officials trying to demolish their homes" (*RFA*, 27 February 2024)

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Phon Sothyroth, "Seven Boeung Tamok Residents Sued For Stopping The Demolition of A Vegetable Stall" (*CamboJA News*, 17 January 2024)

⁴⁰ Sovann Sreypich, "Boeung Tamok Residents Desperately Seek King's Help To Resolve Land Dispute" (*CamboJA News*, 19 March 2024)

⁴¹ Sovann Sreypich, "Endgame at Boeung Tamok: Samraong Tbong Villagers Accept Government Settlements After Protests and Convictions" (*CamboJA News*, 21 August 2024)

⁴² RFA Khmer, "Authorities spray tear gas in northern Cambodia land dispute protest" (*RFA*, 6 March 2024)

⁴³ Eung Sea, "Preah Vihear Provincial Authorities Arrest Villagers and Fire Weapons in Clash Over Land Dispute" (*CamboJA News*, 7 March 2024)

On 8 March 2024, the Preah Vihear Provincial Court **charged 29 of the detained villagers** with “clearing forest land and enclosing it to claim for ownership.” Four were then released on bail, while the remaining 25, including 12 women, were **sent to pre-trial detention**.⁴⁴ On 12 April 2024, **all of them were eventually released** on bail after investigations found that they were cheated by brokers.⁴⁵ On 12 March 2024, Preah Vihear Provincial Governor Kim Rithy addressed local villagers in Kulen district, promising to re-allocate 1,000 hectares of the land granted to Seladamex to 100 families—out of the 300 affected by the proposed development. He **did not specify whether the people involved in the 6 March protest would be eligible**.⁴⁶ On 21 March 2024, Koet Saray, President of the Khmer Student Intelligent League Association, said that about 100 villagers that were evicted on 6 March 2024 were **hiding in the forest out of fear of being arrested**. He added that they were forced to use old hammocks and plastic tents for shelter, and relied on boiled water and fishing for survival.⁴⁷ On 5 April 2024, **Koet Saray was arrested** in Phnom Penh and charged with “committing a misdemeanor after sentencing for a misdemeanor” and “incitement to commit a felony.”⁴⁸ The Phnom Penh Municipal Court said Saray’s claims were “false information” to “incite the villagers to act against the government.” He was **sent to pre-trial detention** on 7 April 2024.⁴⁹

3. Ongoing Cases of Concern

Over the reporting period, CCHR has documented several cases of concern that could potentially lead to forced evictions. A common issue across these cases is the **lack of transparent communication and proper engagement with local residents**, which has confused, fear of eviction, and concerns over insufficient compensation.

a. Concerns Overcompensation and Transparency in the Funan Techo Canal Project

On 5 August 2024, the RGC held the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the Funan Techo Canal, a planned waterway that will connect Phnom Penh to Kep province, passing through Kandal, Takeo, and Kampot provinces. On 3 May 2024, Deputy Prime Minister Sun Chanthol said the construction of the canal would **affect 1,585 households, 149.5 hectares of residential land, and 2,900 hectares of rice fields and plantations**.⁵⁰ Chanthol also stressed that the RGC was planning fair compensation and resettlement for those affected,⁵¹ a pledge he reiterated during the canal’s groundbreaking ceremony: “With regards to villagers whose land, houses and farmlands will be affected by the project, I assure the government has thoroughly

⁴⁴ LICADHO, “[25 People Imprisoned in Preah Vihear Land Dispute](#)” (12 March 2024)

⁴⁵ Runn Sreydeth, “Kulen Residents Out On Bail, But Have Nothing To Return To After Losing Their Land, Livelihood and Hope” ([Cambodia News](#), 20 April 2024)

⁴⁶ RFA Khmer, “After clash, Cambodian governor says some disputed land will go to villagers” ([RFA](#), 13 March 2024)

⁴⁷ RFA Khmer, “After clash, evicted Cambodian villagers hiding in forest, fearful of arrest” ([RFA](#), 21 March 2024)

⁴⁸ LICADHO, “[President of Student Activist Group Arrested and Sent to Pre-trial Detention](#)” (7 April 2024)

⁴⁹ Khuon Narim, “Resounding Call To Release Human Rights Defender Koet Saray Charged For Incitement in Preah Vihear” ([Cambodia News](#), 8 April 2024)

⁵⁰ Seoung Nimol, “Funan Techo Canal – A Look at Public Support, Social Media Campaigns and Compensation As Groundbreaking Nears” ([Cambodia News](#), 31 July 2024)

⁵¹ Taing Rinith, “Committed to fairness: Govt working out compensation to those affected by Funan Techo Canal project” ([Khmer Times](#), 6 May 2024)

studied and [approved] measures to settle the issue to ensure suitable compensation.”⁵²

On 30 May 2024, *CamboJA News* reported that residents living along the proposed canal route **had not yet been informed about compensation packages**. A Ministry of Public Works and Transport spokesperson, when contacted by *CamboJA*, stated that an inter-ministerial working group—led by the Ministry of Economy and Finance and involving local authorities—would be responsible for managing the project's impact on local communities. However, he did not provide a response when asked why the affected residents had not been notified.⁵³ Several media articles throughout July, August, and early September confirmed that local communities had **still not received any information**, with several residents voicing concerns that they **might be offered below-market compensation packages**.⁵⁴

On 2 September 2024, Deputy Prime Minister Sun Chanthol **urged the affected communities to remain patient**, adding that the government had **not yet acquired any land** for the project. On 3 September, the RGC reportedly strengthened the composition of the Funan Techo Canal's Impact Solution Committee to speed up the compensation process. According to a new preliminary report mentioned by *Khmer Times* on 4 September, the canal's construction **is now expected to impact nearly 10,000 homes and over 7,000 hectares of farmland**.⁵⁵ This **inconsistency in impact figures** over time, combined with the **continued absence of clear communication about compensation** and an evident lack of prior consultations with the communities affected, raises significant concerns.

b. Over 1,318 Families Face Forced Eviction Threats in Kratie Province

On 19 June 2024, about 60 people representing 1,318 families from five villages in Sambo district, Kratie province, gathered in front of the Ministry of Interior to demand government intervention to **prevent the loss of their lands to the Svay Rieng Youth Agriculture Company**. The residents have been living and cultivating on the disputed plots since the 1980s.

According to the affected residents, Kamaden Venture Company first invested in the area and properly demarcated the land with the community in 2012. In 2013, Kamaden cooperated with the Svay Rieng Youth Agricultural Company to grow sugarcane, and there were no issues at that time. However, in late May 2024, Svay Rieng Agricultural Youth Company **began using bulldozers to clear residents' houses and crops**, claiming the land was part of its project area and accusing local villagers of encroaching on it. Five houses were reportedly destroyed.

The affected residents alleged that Sambo District Deputy Governor Cheng Kimchup **colluded with the company and threatened to arrest those who opposed it**. Local villagers said they were being **pressured to**

⁵² Khuon Narim, Seoung Nimol, and Tang Porgech, “Funan Techo Canal Breaks Ground With Hopes Of Economic Success; Affected People Promised Compensation” (*CamboJA News*, 5 August 2024)

⁵³ Seoung Nimol “Funan Techo Canal Construction Begins in August, Canal Residents Clueless on Compensation” (*CamboJA News*, 30 May 2024)

⁵⁴ Khuon Narim, Seoung Nimol, and Tang Porgech, “Funan Techo Canal Breaks Ground With Hopes Of Economic Success; Affected People Promised Compensation” (*CamboJA News*, 5 August 2024); Seoung Nimol, “Funan Techo Canal – A Look at Public Support, Social Media Campaigns and Compensation As Groundbreaking Nears” (*CamboJA News*, 31 July 2024); Sameang Chea, “Residents demand fair compensation for Cambodia's canal project” (*Mekong Eye*, 8 July 2024); Torn Vibol “Speedier resolution: Govt accelerates compensation process for Funan Techo Canal project” (*Khmer Times*, 4 September 2024)

⁵⁵ Torn Vibol “Speedier resolution: Govt accelerates compensation process for Funan Techo Canal project” (*Khmer Times*, 4 September 2024)

leave their homes in exchange for a meager compensation of 100,000 to 200,000 riel per family. They also claimed that local authorities improperly marked their ancestral and community forest lands as company property, further worsening the situation.⁵⁶

c. Canal Expansion in Kandal Province Sparks Eviction Fears Among Hundreds of Families

On 21 August 2024, excavators began work to expand 88 canals in Boeung Khyang and Prek Sleng communes in Kandal province, impacting communities on both sides of the canals. As excavation continued, some houses were marked with spray paint and had poles erected around them. This move has alarmed hundreds of local families, many of whom were **not informed in advance**. A village chief interviewed by CamboJA News said he also had no information about the project or its potential impact.⁵⁷ It is unclear how many households could be affected by the project, although earlier estimates range from over 100 to nearly 200.⁵⁸

Among those potentially affected are newly-established residents who had **already been evicted** due to the construction of Phnom Penh's new international airport in 2023. At that time, some were **threatened with legal action** when they protested to protect their homes and demanded fair compensation. After over two years of protests, these villagers eventually accepted the compensation offered and settled near the canal. One of these residents, now seemingly facing the risk of being evicted twice in two years, reported asking local authorities for information about the canals' expansion project, but **no one could provide answers about how many houses would be affected**. He remarked, *"We just look at each other's faces because we don't know when they will come and clear our houses. I suggest that any development must be done with the cooperation of the people and with transparency."*

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The recent and ongoing cases of forced evictions and land disputes across Cambodia underscore a **pervasive lack of transparency, consultation, and fair compensation** in development projects and land management policies. While the RGC has made significant strides in issuing land titles to prevent future disputes, the **persistence of evictions and the inadequate engagement of affected communities** continue to undermine the principles of fair and inclusive development. The absence of clear communication and disregard for the voices of vulnerable populations have left thousands of families uncertain about their future, facing potential injustices and a loss of livelihood.

Therefore, CCHR makes the following recommendations to the RGC:

Recommendations

1. Immediately **halt all pending evictions** until compensation and resettlement measures that are

⁵⁶ The Cambodia Daily, "Citizens' representatives from Kratie province ask the government to stop the activities of private companies destroying their houses and crops" [in Khmer] ([Cambodia Daily](#), 21 June 2024)

⁵⁷ Sovann Sreykich, "Kandal Villagers In The Dark About 88 Canal Project, Seek More Information From Authorities" ([CamboJA News](#), 27 August 2024)

⁵⁸ Kheang Sokmean, "More than 100 families in Boeung Khyang commune affected by state canal expansion project" [in Khmer], ([CamboJA News](#), 3 February 2024)

agreeable to the communities affected can be negotiated.

2. Ensure that all affected communities are **consulted and fully informed** before any development project begins. Transparent processes must be in place to provide details about **potential impacts and compensation packages**, with adequate time for community feedback.

3. Ensure that compensation for those affected by evictions and development projects is **fair, timely, and reflects current market values**. Mechanisms for **negotiation and appeals** should be established to address disputes and grievances.

4. Enforce existing laws and regulations that protect against forced evictions and **develop stronger legal frameworks to prevent unlawful land grabs** and safeguard the rights of vulnerable communities, including indigenous groups.

5. Involve independent bodies, including civil society organizations and international observers, in monitoring development projects and their impact on local communities. This will ensure accountability and help mitigate potential human rights abuses.

6. Ensure that future evictions **comply with relevant international human rights law and standards**, and that evictions are never carried out without prior notice or using **excessive or disproportionate force**.

By implementing these recommendations, the Cambodian government can build trust with its citizens, prevent further disputes and evictions, and ensure that development efforts are both fair and sustainable.

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