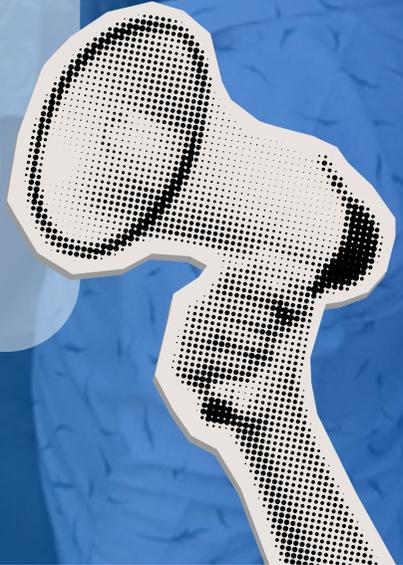




2025

HUMAN RIGHTS TIMELINE



កម្ពុជា
Cambodian Center for Human Rights

December 2025



JANUARY



Bangkok, Thailand

A former Cambodian opposition MP, Lim Kimya, was shot dead by a gunman on a motorcycle in Bangkok on 7 January in an apparent political assassination, according to Thai media reports.

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Phnom Penh

Two journalists were detained for sharing a video of torture at a cyberscam compound in Tien Sangkat, Phnom Penh. Duong Akhara and Lay Socheat, who work for SA TV and Cambodia Star Daily News 24/24 respectively, were charged with "incitement" and "causing serious disruption to social security". The video depicts victims handcuffed to a metal pole and being tortured. Lt. Gen. Chuon Narin, Commissioner of Phnom Penh Metropolitan Police, demanded that the two journalists meet with him to clarify the video. Both journalists have in the past published reporting that is favorable to the RGC.

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A Cambodian migrant worker in South Korea reported that his passport was recently revoked after he used Facebook to criticize the Cambodian government. Buth Vichai told Radio Free Asia that he learned of the passport cancellation from a Phnom Penh government official. His current passport will expire in July, he said.



Seoul, South Korea

A worker from a private company attacked an indigenous villager with a sword while some 200 villagers blocked tractors during a tense standoff over disputed farmland in Preah Vihear. The clash between Kuy indigenous people, provincial authorities and workers from Santana Agro Products Co. Ltd. began when villagers held a religious ceremony to curse and condemn the agricultural development and processing company.



Preah Vihear



FEBRUARY



Phnom Penh

On 16 February, around 100 families in Chrouy Ampil village, Kbal Koh commune held a protest to demand land titles in Koh Meas from the authorities. According to a Sub-Decree No. 2010, signed in 2020, the land has been reclassified as private state land, transferring one part of it to the Phnom Penh Capital Administration and the other to the Kandal Provincial Administration, and then leasing the land to Khun Sear Import Export Company for development for 50 years.



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On 17 February, the Phnom Penh Appeal Court denied bail to five of the Mother Nature activists currently serving sentences related to charges of plotting to overthrow the government, in relation to their environmental activism. The judge reasoned that given they had been convicted on felony charges, they could not be released, in order to "prevent new offenses, threats on witnesses and to maintain public order". He noted that the Appeal Court had scheduled to hear their case the following month. The activists had cited family caring responsibilities and health conditions in their bail application.

On 25 February, the Phnom Penh Appeal Court denied a motion filed by a number of the Paris Peace Agreement (PPA) activists and other defendants in the CLV-DTA Case to have their cases heard together, rather than split up, as per the Prosecutor's request.



Phnom Penh



Phnom Penh



MARCH



Kampong Cham

On 16 March, three members of the Candlelight Party – Mao Heng, second deputy chief of Cheyou commune and deputy chief of Chamkar Loeu District Executive Council, Kan Kun, second deputy chief of Ta Bruk commune, and Muth Rin, Member of the Chamkar Loeu District Executive Council – were arrested by the Anti-Cybercrime Unit from their homes in Kampong Cham, for allegedly spreading defamatory comments on social media. The allegations were in relation to comments the three had made on social media, comparing the former Prime Minister to the former President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte. The comments were made in the context of the arrest warrant issued against Duterte by the International Criminal Court (ICC). The warrant for their arrest was issued by the Phnom Penh Municipal Court, and the three were placed in pre-trial detention, though the place of their detention had not been made known.



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On 16 March, the Phnom Penh Police Commissioner summonsed Bun Park, a social media commentator, for questioning at the Phnom Penh Police Station to explain the meaning of the word "peace" in one of his social media posts. It is in relation to Park's post on Facebook, in which he stated, "Get rid of the gangs and the robbers so we can say we have peace".



Phnom Penh

On 17 March, the former Senate President posted on his Facebook, expressing his support for the actions of US President Donald Trump to put journalists at Voice of America (VOA) and other US-funded broadcasters on leave, effectively freezing operations at the news outlets. He stated it was part of combatting fake news and lies.



APRIL



Kampong Thom

On 22 April, Vice President of the Nation Power Party (NPP) for Kpang Thom province, Yang Sokkheang, was detained and charged by the Phnom Penh Municipal Court for “incitement” and “insulting the King” through Facebook posts. According to the police, since April 2024 Yang had regularly posted messages on Facebook allegedly inciting the public to oppose the government and insulting government leaders.



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On 24 April, the Phnom Penh Municipal Court ordered the seizure of opposition advisor and labor activist Rong Chhun’s assets, including his home, over a contested \$100,000 fine linked to a 2021 incitement conviction. The payment deadline for the fine has been extended a number of times. After missing a February deadline and requesting to pay in instalments, then failing to meet a late March extension, the court issued a notice ordering the seizure and forced sale of Rong Chhun’s Phnom Penh home.



Phnom Penh



MAY



Phnom Penh

On 5 May, the Phnom Penh Municipal Court convicted opposition advisor and labour activist Rong Chhun of criticizing the ruling party's border policies and the way it "handles" the illicit cybercrime industry. He was sentenced to four years in prison and ordered to pay compensation of four million riel (about \$1,000), and issued an additional criminal punishment which stripped him of the "right to vote and stand for election".

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Journalist Ouk Mao, who reports on illegal deforestation in the Prey Lang Wildlife Sanctuary, was arrested and charged with incitement and defamation by the Stung Treng Provincial Court. Mao has been reporting on environmental crimes and says he has faced ongoing harassment, including being assaulted, having his phone destroyed, and dealing with 15 legal cases.



Stung Treng

On 27 May 2025, the appeal trials for labour rights defender and President of the Cambodian Tourism and Service Workers' Federation (CTSWF), Mr. Morn Rithy, and social commentator Mr. Ny Nak, took place before the Phnom Penh Appeal Court. After just 15 minutes of deliberation for both cases and that of another defendant, the Court delivered its verdicts, upholding the convictions of Mr. Morn Rithy and Mr. Ny Nak issued by the Phnom Penh Municipal Court.



Phnom Penh



JUNE



Phnom Penh

An online publisher, Hang Samnang, and two others were arrested and charged with “harming army morale”, “inciting discrimination” and “wearing military-like uniforms without permission”. The charges were brought in response to a video the three posted in which they criticized how frontline soldiers stay in low ranks, while others in the capital hold higher ranks.

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Doeun Chhan, a senior official of the opposition Candlelight Party, was charged by the Phnom Penh Municipal Court with forging a public document. He allegedly faked the thumbprint of former party member Leng Vandy on a resignation letter while serving as deputy commune chief in Stung Meanchey 1.



Phnom Penh

Siem Reap Provincial Court sentenced Sy Loeuy, a 40-year-old woodworker, to 12 years in prison and ordered him to pay \$13,500 for killing journalist Chhoeung Chhoeung, who was investigating illegal logging. Chhoeung, 63, was the first journalist killed in Cambodia in over a decade.



Siem Reap



JULY



Phnom Penh

The Phnom Penh Appeals Court upheld the conviction of Chea Chantha, local leader of the Independent Democratic Association of Informal Economy (IDEA). Chantha was sentenced to 18 months by the Svay Rieng Provincial Court in December 2024 for the charge of fraud for disseminating information on the registration of NSSF cards to informal vendors. His appeal hearing took place seven months after his conviction, during which time he remained in pre-trial detention.

Nine villagers from Boeung Tamok were sentenced to one month in jail for protesting a land issue, even though they had already agreed to the government's land exchange plan. The court said they were guilty of "opposing public office".



Phnom Penh

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The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) officially announced that the Constitution had been amended, enabling the revocation of Cambodian citizenship by the government. The updated Article 33 now allows for the loss of citizenship by law, removing the earlier guarantee that Khmer citizens could not be stripped of their nationality. Supporters say it protects national sovereignty, but both national and international human rights organizations warn it could be used to silence dissent.



Amidst the Thailand-Cambodia border conflict, eighteen Cambodian soldiers were captured by Thai forces after a post-ceasefire encounter. The soldiers were reportedly detained without provocation during what was meant to be a peaceful handshake in the Choam Te area of Preah Vihear.



Preah Vihear



AUGUST



Battambang

Amidst the Thailand–Cambodia border conflict, about 910,000 Cambodian migrant workers have returned from Thailand after facing rising discrimination, intimidation, and violence from Thai extremist gangs during recent border clashes. Many reported no longer feeling safe and stated they did not intend to return to Thailand.

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On 21 August, the Ministry of Information revoked the media license of Sara NCC Daily after it posted reports about Cambodia–Thai border tensions, which it claimed threatened national security. The revocation came after journalist Meas Sara interviewed a citizen about the situation of Cambodian homes seized by the Thai army and the military patrol posts at the border crossing.

The National Assembly passed a law that allows the government to strip the citizenship of Cambodians accused of colluding with foreign countries or harming national security. It follows from the constitutional amendment in July that provides for the same.



Banteay Meanchey



SEPTEMBER



Phnom Penh

The staggered trials began for the 37 individuals charged with “incitement” in relation to the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area (CLV-DTA). Many had spent more than a year in pre-trial detention by the time the trial began. A number of defendants had been denied bail, even though the law limits how long people can be kept in detention before trial.



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The Prime Minister announced that Cambodia’s garment, footwear and travel goods (GFT) workers will see only a \$2 minimum wage increase in 2026, raising it from \$208 to \$210. Workers expressed frustration, saying that the raise is not sufficient given the rising cost of living, with many calling it “disrespectful” and inadequate to cover daily expenses.



Siem Reap

Amidst the Thailand-Cambodia border conflict, two Cambodian journalists, Porn Sopheap and Pheap Pheara, were arrested and charged with treason under Article 445 of the Criminal Code for allegedly sharing sensitive border information with a foreign country. If found guilty, they could face 7-15 years in prison.



Phnom Penh



Pich Piseth, an employee at Men Ou garment factory and president of its workers' union was arrested on incitement charges after commenting on a social media post criticizing Sok Kin, president of the Building and Wood Workers Trade Union Federation of Cambodia (BWTUC) and chair of the Cambodian Labor Confederation (CLC).



OCTOBER

Phon Yuth, a vocal activist from Takeo province, was arrested for unclear reasons, according to his wife. It marks his third detention since 2019, when he was jailed for criticizing former Prime Minister Hun Sen on Facebook. He was later arrested again in 2024 after posting a video criticizing the Prime Minister. Yuth, who has a disability, was taken from his home by police without explanation.



Takeo

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Two men in Siem Reap were arrested and charged for their online posts criticizing the government. Tour guide Pin Poch, 48, was accused of promoting a “color revolution” after sharing a video from Nepal and commenting about citizens protesting against corruption. In a similar case, San Chansey, a bank worker, was also detained for “incitement” and “insulting public officials” on Facebook.



Siem Reap



NOVEMBER

Labour rights defender Morm Rithy was released from Prey Sar prison after serving an 18 month sentence for "incitement" and "discrediting a judicial decision". The charges had been brought against him in relation to a Facebook post in which he criticized a casino owner in relation to a dispute regarding a female casino worker, which he called unjust. Rithy, president of the Cambodian Tourism and Service Workers' Federation (CTSWF) and vice president of the Cambodian Labor Confederation (CLC) suffered serious health problems during his imprisonment due to poor conditions.



Phnom Penh

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Amidst the Thailand-Cambodia border conflict, an 18 year old Cambodian migrant worker was allegedly raped by seven Thai soldiers after being blocked from returning to Cambodia. The government and civil society organizations have urged for stronger accountability and to ensure safer migration pathways.



Banteay Meanchey



DECEMBER



Phnom Penh

Five activists from Mother Nature Cambodia were denied their bail request by the Phnom Penh Appeal Court. Ly Chandaravuth, Phuon Keoreaksmeay, Long Kunthea, Thon Ratha, and Yim Leanghy have now been imprisoned for almost 18 months, following their conviction on 2 July 2024 for "plotting" and "insulting the king", and are currently serving sentences ranging from six to eight years. They are awaiting the appeal trial of their conviction. The denial of their bail application means they must remain in pre-trial detention whilst they await their trial.

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