Prime Minister Hun Sen on Monday urged officials to speed up the court process for the more than 20,000 women detainees awaiting trial.

Speaking at an annual meeting of the Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW) at the Peace Palace, Hun Sen said the trials for these women must be prioritised, even if that means renting hotel rooms to use them as provisional courtrooms.

“I urged the Cambodian National Council for Women and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs to continue cooperation with the Ministry of Interior to follow up on cases involving women convicts and suspects to speed up their trials and provide lawyers,” Hun Sen said in a post on his Facebook page.

“Samdech Techo told the Ministry of Justice to speed up this work because there are now over 20,000 cases at the pre-trial stage involving women.

“Please speed up this work. If there are not enough courtrooms, Samdech permits you to rent at hotels to conduct the hearings,” his post said.

Hun Sen also made a similar statement last year that led to the formation of a legal team called ‘Hun Sen voluntary legal aid team’ led by government lawyer Ky Tech. The group provides legal aid to poor women nationwide.

Tech told The Post on Monday that last year, his team provided legal consultation in 1,033 cases.
In 52 cases, the team provided lawyers to defend women suspects, while it provided consultation through Facebook in 399 cases.

Tech said 24 cases were closed, including 18 involving pregnant women or women with young children.

The legal team also engaged in outreach work, informing the public about the service through radio and TV channels and travelling to several provinces across the country.

He said poor women could contact the legal team to request their help. Before accepting the request, the legal team must review the case’s eligibility.

Ministry of Justice spokesman Chin Malin said much has been achieved since 2019. There have been several royal pardons for convicted women, while other women convicts saw their sentences reduced.

Women in pre-trial detention received free legal services and some were granted bail under court supervision.

“However, there are still challenges. There are too many cases and we have limited human resources and a limited number of courtrooms.

“This problem cannot be solved quickly. We are solving it one step at a time,” he said, adding that conducting hearings at a hotel, as Hun Sen suggested, is not against the law.

Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (CCHR) executive director Sopheap Chak said on Monday that the right to be tried without undue delays was protected by national and international law.

“Excessive trial delays erode the presumption of innocence and disrupt the daily lives of the accused. Delays cause a culture of uncertainty and intimidation and leave individuals in a state of limbo.

“This is further aggravated in cases where bail is denied and the accused individuals are detained. It is paramount that such individuals are brought to trial as soon as possible to protect their right to liberty and the right to the presumption of innocence,” Chak said,” Chak said.

Details: https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/pm-speed-trial-over-20000-women-detention?fbclid=IwAR3j6o6n2jd7bWmvEnE03ji7vOQRfvlCCMPXpHVr5eFAOCaFMZb0cnNemdY