Infographic

GENDER-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES OF WHRDs ON THE FRONTLINE

01. Who are the WHRDs?

WHRDs, an acronym for Women Human Rights Defenders, are women and girls who focus on any human rights issues, including people of all other genders whose work is to promote women’s rights and gender equality in a peaceful manner.

Examples of WHRDs

- Indigenous women fighting for land and environmental rights
- LGBTIQ+ individual speaking up against discrimination
- Woman journalist exposing issues of interest to the public

WHRDs have been standing up for human rights particularly the rights of women and girls for decades due to the systematic and constant patterns of discrimination and violence of their fundamental rights.

They can be seen anywhere either at the international, regional, national, or local level which Eleanor Roosevelt called “in small places, close to home”.

02. Normative Framework

1. International Legal Framework

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol
- The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (HRD Declaration)
- The Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs (the Special Rapporteur)

2. National Legal Framework

- The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia

In Cambodia, all WHRDs are entitled to the right to perform their activities to achieve their goals that can result in the realization of human rights including the rights of women and girls. Their rights are promoted and protected under both the international and national legal framework laws.

- The Beijing Platform for Action
- The Universal Periodical Review (UPR) 3rd Cycle
In Cambodia, WHRDs on the frontline often encountered a gender-specific challenge. It is an additional challenge from their activism that their male counterparts don't face.

02. Causes

- Systematic Exclusion
- Discrimination from Community

03. Gender-Specific Challenges

- Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
- Stigmatization
- Non-Recognition of Their Action

04. Effects

- Gender Norms
- Gender Inequality
- Perception of Their Activism

Reasons that have made them exposed to these additional challenges.
04. Questions for the Government

Below are the ten questions that Cambodian people want to question the implementation of WHRDs and LGBTIQ+ activists’ rights in Cambodia. These questions were selected by a committee following the criteria from an online contest.

1. What mechanisms, legal or otherwise, does the government have in place to implement women’s rights and to prevent violence and discrimination, especially against LGBTIQ+ activists?

2. Are there dedicated mechanisms to ensure that national and local officials protect the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ individuals?

3. What is the government’s strategy to promote women’s rights in politics?

4. What has the government done in response to the violence against women, political, human rights, and labor activists?

5. What can the government do to uphold the rights of WHRDs and LGBTIQ+ activists?

6. What are the government’s approaches to expanding civic space to eliminate violence against women and the LGBTIQ+ community?

7. What is the government’s strategy to increase women’s participation in leadership and decision-making roles in every sector?

8. WHRDs have been harassed, devalued, and insulted on social media. What should the government and other relevant stakeholders do to address these issues?

9. Is there a policy that explicitly protects WHRDs to achieve inclusive development and gender equality?

10. Why cannot mostly rural women engage in public life?

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