

# Interior Ministry Suspends CCFC Amidst Criminal Investigations



CCFC office has been closed pending the outcome of criminal investigations into several staff.  
(CCHR Facebook Page)

The Interior Ministry announced Tuesday that it suspended the Coalition of Cambodian Farmers Community (CCFC) on June 7, after its president and two other staff members [were arrested](#) and charged with plotting and incitement in May.

The ministry's letter issued a "temporary suspension of activity" of the CCFC, located in Phnom Penh's Sen Sok district, until the court finishes investigating the criminal cases.

CCFC acting president Meun Ratana said he wants the ministry to review and reconsider its decision because none of the work that the CCFC has done involved revolution or incitement. He said the group just shares agricultural techniques and provides rice seeds to farmers.

Interior Ministry spokesperson Khieu Sopheak has previously accused CCFC's staff of plotting a Pol Pot-style "[peasant revolution](#)."

"We are young and only have 20 employees, so how can we work toward treason or a revolution? If you do not believe me, the Ministry of Interior can go and ask the local people," Ratana said. "Even in politics, we are never involved because we only deal with farmland and agriculture."

The decision to suspend the association will have a negative impact on all of the staff, who may not be able to find other jobs with their skill sets, he said.

"When the CCFC is suspended, it will affect the salaries of the staff," Ratana said. "Every employee is indebted to the bank, which will put them at risk of not having [enough funds] to support their lives, especially to pay back the bank."

Ratanakiri provincial court spokesperson Keo Pisoth said that the investigations are still ongoing in the four CCFC criminal cases.

The cases are "still in the investigation phase. [I] don't know when it will finish," he told CamboJA.

In May the three CCFC employees were [granted bail](#) after confessing to their offenses and publicly apologizing to Prime Minister Hun Sen. Some of their colleagues said they believed the confessions were not sincere and were made under pressure.

CCFC has been under scrutiny by authorities ever since it held a workshop in mid-May in Ratanakiri, after which police detained and questioned 17 staffers for around 24 hours. CCFC president Theng Savoeun and two colleagues were removed from a bus which had been traveling through Kratie province en route to Phnom Penh after the workshop. They were then sent back to Ratanakiri and charged soon after with plotting and incitement.

The Ratanakiri court [filed the same charges](#) against independent researcher Chan Vibol, who also attended the workshop. Vibol is still at large.

Chhim Kan, the director of association and political party affairs at the Ministry of Interior, declined to comment because he was in a meeting.