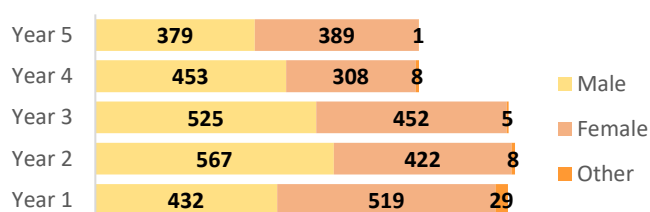


Public Perceptions of Fundamental Freedoms in Cambodia: Five Year Trends

The Fundamental Freedoms Monitoring Project (FFMP) is a multi-year project¹ that monitors the space for civil society in Cambodia, including the degree to which the freedoms of association, expression and assembly (fundamental freedoms) are understood and can be exercised. Each year,² the FFMP conducts public polls to monitor if individuals in Cambodia understand the fundamental freedoms and feel free to exercise them. The FFMP used convenience sampling across all Cambodian provinces to conduct the poll each year and aimed to capture a range of age groups and an equal number of male and female respondents.

Responses from **approximately 1,000 Cambodians** were captured each year. There were fewer respondents in Years 4 and 5 due to the challenges of in-person data collection triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

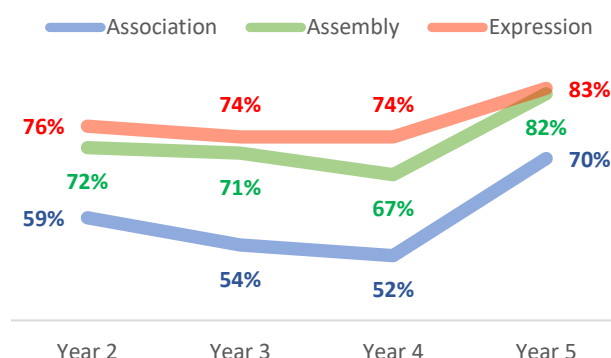
Number of public poll respondents



Understanding of fundamental freedoms

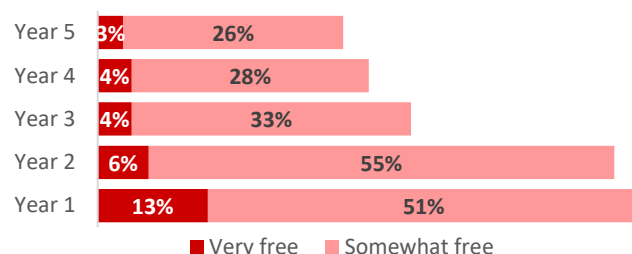
Freedom of association appears to have been the least understood of the freedoms throughout the years, but this improved in Year 5. Respondents reported being more familiar with all the fundamental freedoms in Year 5 than in previous years.

Percentage of respondents who answered they had some understanding of the freedom of...

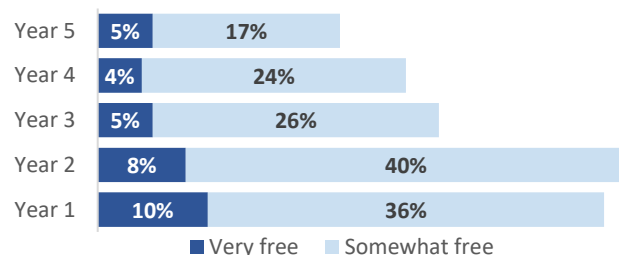


Extent to which individuals feel free to exercise fundamental freedoms

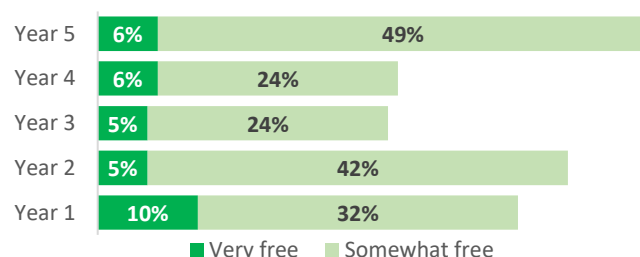
Freedom to speak in public: The percentage of respondents who report feeling “very free” or “somewhat free” to speak in public has declined.



Freedom to participate in political activities: The percentage of respondents who report feeling “very free” or “somewhat free” to participate in political activities has decreased.



Freedom to peacefully strike: The proportion of respondents who answered they feel “somewhat free” to peacefully strike has fluctuated over the years, reaching its highest level in Year 5.



¹ Year One covered April 2016–March 2017; Year Two covered April 2017–March 2018; Year Three covered April 2018–March 2019; Year Four covered April 2019–March 2020; and Year Five covered April 2020–December 2020.

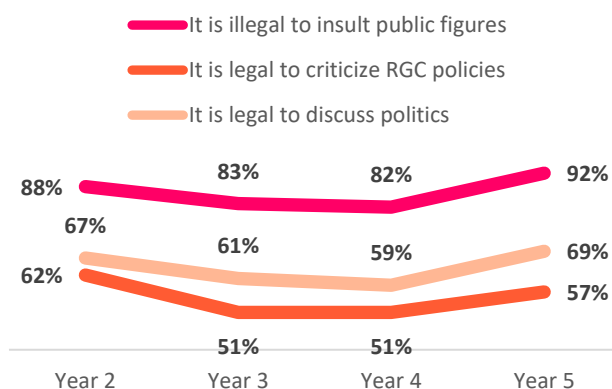
² Public polls were conducted in October 2016 (Year One), March 2018 (Year Two), March 2019 (Year Three), March 2020 (Year Four) and December 2020 (Year Five).

Ability of individuals to identify the limitations of their rights

The public's ability to fully exercise their fundamental freedoms is contingent on their understanding of domestic law in relation to said freedoms. To gauge if people understood their rights and the limitations of these rights, respondents were asked each year to identify if certain activities were legal or illegal.

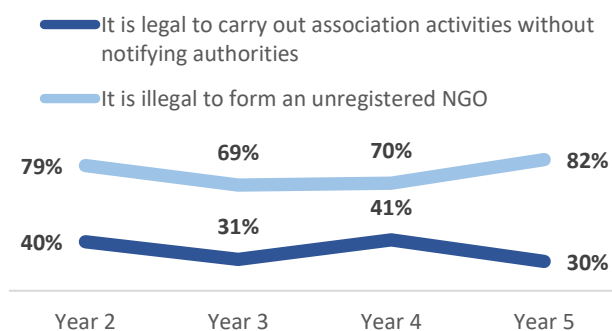
Freedom of expression: Over the years, most respondents correctly answered it is illegal to insult public figures. However, less respondents correctly answered that it was legal to criticize Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) policies and to discuss politics with other people.

Percentage of respondents who correctly answered that...



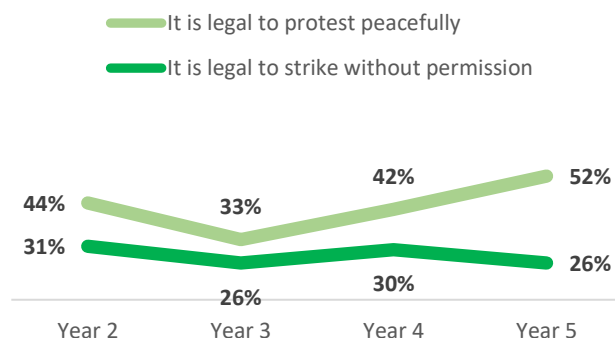
Freedom of association: Most respondents correctly answered that it is illegal to form an unregistered non-governmental organization (NGO) each year, but few correctly answered that it is legal to carry out association activities without notifying authorities.

Percentage of respondents who correctly answered that...



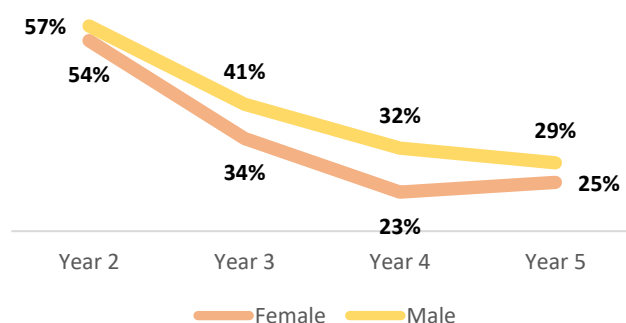
Freedom of assembly: The percentage of respondents who correctly answered it is legal to protest peacefully has remained low over the years, reaching more than 50% for the first time in Year 5. Less than one third of respondents every year correctly stated it is legal to strike without permission.

Percentage of respondents who correctly answered that...

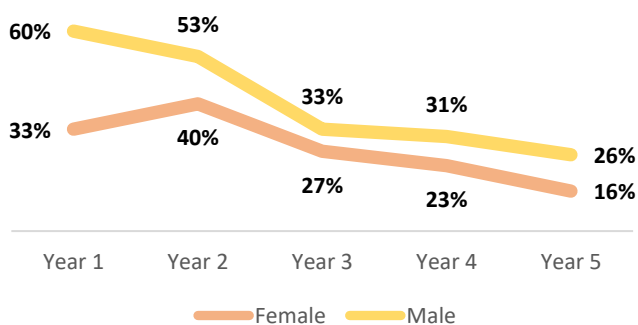


Differences by gender

More male respondents than female respondents have consistently answered they felt "somewhat free" or "very free" to speak on social media over the years. However, this number continues to decline for both male and female respondents.



More men than women answered they felt "very free" or "somewhat free" to take part in political activities over the years. However, this number continues to decline for both male and female respondents.



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Cambodian Center for Human Rights



November 2021