



CCHR’s Annual Report for 2017

Organization	Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”)
Project Goal	CCHR’s vision is of a non-violent Cambodia in which people can enjoy the fundamental human rights to which they are entitled, are treated equally, are empowered to participate in democracy, and all can share in the benefits of Cambodia’s ongoing economic development. CCHR is an independent and non-partisan organization, whose work is premised on the values of equality, impartiality, transparency and non-discrimination.
Duration	January- December 2017

During this reporting period, between January and December 2017, the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”) has worked progressively toward its goal, as follows:

I. Progress

During the reporting period, CCHR issued 67 publications related to human rights, including press releases/statements, open letters, joint statements, human rights defenders alerts, briefing notes, research reports, factsheets, legal analyses, joint submissions, policy briefs and leaflets. These documents were released in order to advocate for, educate and raise awareness of a wide variety of human rights issues, including fundamental freedoms, land rights, business and human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity (“SOGI”), judicial reform, minority rights, and political participation.

As a result of ongoing media monitoring through 2017, CCHR has been monitoring the news in order to keep an up-to-date understanding of current events and key issues, focusing particularly on land rights and business and human rights in general, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights (“LGBT”), and the status of fundamental freedoms across the country. In total, during the reporting period, 1755 media reports related to freedom of association and other fundamental freedoms were gathered, and 334 media stories related to land conflict were collected.

The Business and Human Rights Project, combined with the Land Tenure Security Project, published a the factsheet on [Free, Prior and Informed Consent](#) in August 2017 on the occasion of the international world indigenous people’s day, and participated in a joint-statement entitled “[CSOs Call on Phnom Penh Municipality to Drops its Ultimatum to Borei Keila Families and Provide Proper Compensation Without Delay](#)” in December 2017. While the other publications were used as tools to raise public awareness, the joint-statement on Borei Keila led to positive change, as the authorities continued the discussions with the affected communities as a result.

In addition, during the reporting period, CCHR conducted at least 161 live radio talk shows, each focusing on one or more of the topics listed in paragraph 1 above, including land rights, business and human rights, fair trial rights, LGBT rights, legal discussion and weekly analysis. Key stakeholders from the civil society and from the authorities were invited to participate and share their views. Out of the 161 shows, 124 shows were streamed live on CCHR's facebook page, receiving a total 10,157 like, 5,406 Share and 232,067 Views.

CCHR held two reports launching and three trainings on various topics such as advocacy skills, United Nations guiding principles of Business and Human Rights, land law, citizenship related rights. It also conducted one universal periodic review ("UPR") consultation with stakeholders, co-organized by the Cambodian Human Rights Committee ("CHRC") and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ("OHCHR"), and monitored five cascade trainings. As part of its fair trial rights project, in 2017, CCHR monitored 245 cases at the Appeal Court. Finally, CCHR provided legal advice/legal representative, and humanitarian support to 31 cases in 2017.

Of particular note, CCHR's SOGI project had published a report entitled "Cambodia's Rainbow Families",¹ in November 2017. The findings presented in this report are based on a combination of desk and field research conducted between February and June 2017, focusing on three thematic issues: marriage, adoption and gender recognition. Research included 121 interviews with co-habiting rainbow couples, former couples, local authorities, and representatives of the Royal Government of Cambodia ("RGC"), conducted across 10 provinces. The report reveals previously unreported information about rainbow couples and families in Cambodia. It shows that – despite the fact that marriage equality is not possible according to the Cambodian Constitution – many currently co-habiting rainbow couples already live as spouses, some having conducted unofficial wedding ceremonies, and many (21.50%) having received important legal recognition in the form of family books issued by the Commune authorities. Furthermore, the report also shows that there are significant disparities between different provinces regarding the availability of family books for rainbow couples. In some provinces, the vast majority of rainbow couples received a family books; in others, the practice is non-existent. The outcomes of these efforts were very positive following one meeting between CCHR and the Ministry of Justice ("MoJ") as well as another meeting with the Ministry of Interior ("Mol"), which aimed to present key research findings on the situation and challenges faced by rainbow families and outline key recommendations. The meeting was an opportunity to help the authorities gain a better understanding of Cambodia's rainbow families. During both meetings, all parties agreed on the importance of ensuring the promotion and protection of LGBT rights. Finally, CCHR highlighted the need to take immediate action to achieve gender recognition, facilitate access to adoption and ensure the protection of property rights.

CCHR also produced two educational videos. The first video, entitled "My Justice", aimed to illustrate how anyone charged with a criminal offense is entitled to a fair trial, including by 1) having the right to understand the nature and cause of the charge; 2) being tried by an independent and impartial tribunal; 3) being given adequate time and facilities to prepare a defense; and, 4) being tried without undue delay, through fictional story-telling. The video can be found on [YouTube](#) and on [CCHR's Facebook](#). The video has received numerous hits on Facebook with 3,000 shares, 5,800 'likes' and

¹ Rainbow families is an umbrella term used throughout this report to describe families including couples with two partners of the same sex, or in which one or both partners identifies as transgender.

97,000 views² as of 31 January 2018. The second video is entitled “Rainbow Couples” and depicts the experiences and perspectives of two rainbow couples: a young couple who are about to celebrate their wedding ceremony in Preah Vihear province, and another who describe their 30-year long relationship. In addition, H.E. Chin Malin, undersecretary of state of the Ministry of Justice, explains the Cambodian law related to same-sex marriage. The video can be viewed online on [YouTube](#) and on [CCHR’s Facebook](#). It received 47 shares, 66 likes and 5,400 views as of 31 January 2018. In November 2017, CCHR also produced 4 educational leaflets related to Fair Trial Rights including 1) [the right to understand the nature and cause of the charge\(s\)](#); 2) [the right to be tried by an independent and impartial tribunal](#); 3) [the right to adequate time and facilities to prepare a defense](#); and, 4) [the right to be tried without undue delay](#).

[CCHR also published](#) one leaflet on [the Universal Periodic Review and Cambodia Update, in August 2017](#).

II. What went well and what did not

Several successes for LGBT rights were experienced through the SOGI Project. The publication of the [Cambodia’s Rainbow Families](#) report has made an important impact on the visibility of the discrimination and issues faced by LGBT communities, given the positive reception it received. The report also provided a solid foundation for CCHR’s advocacy. The UPR Project has collaborated with government’s bodies – namely the CHRC and the MoJ – as part of the organization of the Mid-Term UPR National Consultation Workshop in June 2017.

After the Commune/Sangkat Election in June 2017, the overall human rights and political situation deteriorated, and the space for civil society to operate rapidly shrank. It became increasingly difficult for civil society organizations (“CSOs”) to undertake their work, and some CSOs have been directly targeted. For instance, in November 2017, CCHR suffered a direct threat of being shut down. However, it was later cleared of any wrongdoing, recognized as an organization contributing to the promotion of human rights and permitted to continue its operations.

In addition, some community representatives in certain provinces had been subject to intimidation and threats, preventing them from contacting external stakeholders to join meetings and training with NGOs, and from conducting events at the ground.

III. Lessons learned

Despite facing such threats, CCHR learnt that being persistent in its principled and balanced advocacy approach, and engaging in dialogue with various stakeholders as necessary, helped it continuing to do its work. CCHR also ensured that it approached all issues from a strictly human rights, apolitical and principled perspective, aiming to give a balanced view of events.

IV. Gender and Rights Based Approach

CCHR strives to achieve gender equality throughout all of its programs and projects. During the reporting period, CCHR sought to overcome barriers to women’s engagement, by ensuring equal representation of male and female speaks at events. CCHR also used every opportunity to restate the fact that men and women and LGBTs have equal legal status with regards to human rights.

² View: number of times that a post was accessed for at least 3 seconds, source: <http://bit.ly/1upjLvd>.

In addition, CCHR conducted special events to promote women human rights defenders (“WHRDs”) during the International Women Day 8 March 2017, and still continues providing appropriate legal, humanitarian and psychosocial support to WHRDs who have faced violence, harassment and threats as a result of their work.

V. Appendix: CCHR’s key publication

- Report on [Cambodia’s Rainbow Families](#)
- Video on [Rainbow Families in Cambodia](#)
- Video on [My Justice](#)
- Leaflet on [Right to Understand the Nature and Cause of the Charge](#)
- Leaflet on [The Right to be Tried by an Independent and Impartial Tribunal](#)
- Leaflet on [The Right to Adequate Time and Facilities to Prepare a Defense](#)
- Leaflet on [The Right to be Tried Without Undue Delay](#)
- Leaflet on [The Universal Periodic Review and Cambodia Update - August 2017](#)

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