



CCHR’s Annual Report for 2015

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.
Duration	From January- December 2015

During this reporting period from January-December 2015, Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”) has worked progressively toward its plan as the following:

I. Progress

During the reporting period, CCHR issued **72** publications, including Press Releases/Media Comments/Open Letters, Joint Statements, Human Rights Defenders and/or Freedom of Expression Alerts, Briefing Notes, Research Report, Factsheets, Legal Analyses, and other types of documents (including media alerts, letters, and leaflet). These documents were released in order to advocate for 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, judicial reform, minority rights and more. CCHR publications have led authorities to take action in response to human rights violations. For example, on 30 August CCHR released a press release calling for a proper investigation into Kheom Sophat’s disappearance. In response, the chief of General Commissariat of National Police [called for the family of Kheom Sophat to file a complaint](#) to the national police to provide the police with basic information to facilitate further investigation.

In addition, CCHR conducted at least **169** live radio talk shows, each focusing on one or more of the topics above, including related to land rights, business and human rights, related to fair trial rights, LGBT rights, related to women human rights defenders (“WHRDs”) and to fundamental freedoms. CCHR organized two joint CSO workshops: one consultation workshop on the LANGO, and one on access to information and the access to information law. CCHR held **29** trainings on topics ranging from information technology, social media, LGBT rights, land rights, fair trial rights, business and human rights and security measures for WHRDs.

Of particular note, CCHR conducted three campaigns. In the lead up to International Women’s Day, CCHR conducted a [campaign](#) on 6 March calling for the release of 12 detainees, including 11 women and one monk wrongfully convicted and jailed while protesting against land rights violations. To ask the RGC to stop rushing controversial legislative processes and engage in consultations with relevant

stakeholders in relation to the LANGO, CCHR participated in the “[Stop and Consult](#)” campaign with other CSOs. Finally, to mark the second UN International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, CCHR launched its “[Never Forget](#)” campaign on 2 November, which aimed to highlight the pervasive culture of impunity in Cambodia, serving as a reminder to both the government and the public not to forget Cambodia’s many victims of impunity and their families. CCHR displayed a week-long photo exhibition at FCC’s the Mansion in Phnom Penh as part of the campaign, displaying [10 photo profiles](#) of victims of impunity in Cambodia, and produced a short [video](#) on impunity.

II. What went well and what didn’t

Several successes for LGBT rights were experienced through the SOGI Project. For example, the reaction of the government to ongoing advocacy on LGBT rights has been encouraging, as it is indicative of a positivity and openness toward same-sex marriage – the support expressed by Council of Ministers Spokesman Phay Siphon, and positive engagement with CCHR press releases is of particular note. In addition, the report on LGBT Youth Bullying in Schools was well received, and has been perceived as helpful to policy makers, civil society and the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport, as it draws attention to how to better protect LGBT students from bullying acts.

Despite sustained efforts by civil society with the “Stop and Consult” campaign regarding the LANGO, the LANGO was enacted in August and consequently the situation of fundamental freedoms has been further restricted since.

In addition, during field missions, CCHR met some challenges prevented its Projects from achieving its desired results. For instance, when the Business and Human Rights (“BHR”) Project attempted to interview representatives from private companies involved in land disputes for its research in September, the three companies refused to meet with the team or simply failed to respond. In addition, challenges have come from the authorities during such missions. For example, on 13 November 2015, after the LRP team had visited Chork Cha village, the team’s car was stopped at a military police checkpoint in O’Rang district in Mondulkiri province. The authorities ordered the driver to get out of the car, and searched the vehicle for weapons. Overall, CCHR found that the project objectives and activities were both realistic and achievable.

III. Lessons learned

CCHR learnt that being persistent in advocacy approach could result in certain outcomes. For instance, after the LANGO had been adopted, on 21 August 2015, CCHR wrote an open letter to the Minister of Interior to request for clarification from MoI regarding the application of the LANGO to CBOs and informal groups. The open letter was sent after CCHR received information about the use of LANGO to ban a community protest in Kratie province. On 21 September 2015, the MoI responded to CCHR and confirmed that the LANGO does not apply to small community groups like the families in Khsoem commune. However, the letter does state that local officials in Kratie were correct to tell the community that they must be registered because they are an indigenous community seeking a communal land title. CCHR welcomed this positive engagement from the MoI, especially the clarification on the proper application of the LANGO to CBOs. However, CCHR believes that the Khsoem case requires further clarification.

Finally, producing Multi Media/Videos for educational materials was found to be time consuming and took longer than expected, due to technical aspects as well as the complicity of the information to be gathered at the ground.

IV. Gender and the 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, such as ensuring equal representation of male and female speakers at events, and at all opportunities restating the fact of men and women's equal legal status with regards to human rights.

As community leaders or civil society activists, WHRDs play a vital role in the promotion, strengthening, and protection of human rights. CCHR has noted with concern that WHRDs suffer from a range of violations and abuses, including gender based violence, rooted in discriminatory practices and social norms that condone violence against women. Thus, the WHRD project has sought to empower and protect WHRDs in Cambodia, providing appropriate legal, humanitarian and psychosocial support to WHRDs who have faced violence, harassment and threats as a result of their work.

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