Crackdown of Arrests

28 activists, human rights defenders, and dissenting voices have been arrested, detained, and charged in the past six months. Notably, on 31 July 2020 with the arrest of Rong Chhun, the president of the Cambodian Confederation of Unions. Mr. Chhun was arrested for allegedly exercising his right to freedom of expression on the topic of the Cambodia-Vietnam border. The remaining three, Chhou Pheng, Chum Puthy, and Sar Kanika, were charged with incitement by the Phnom Penh Municipal Court and sent to pre-trial detention where they remain.

13 August 2020
State use of force at assemblies has increased during this crackdown. For example, on 13 August 2020, authorities forcibly dispersed a group of people standing near the Phnom Penh Municipal Court to collectively call for Mr. Chhun's release.

14 August 2020
Soung Sophorn, president of the Khmer Win Party, was arrested for allegedly distorting information related to border issues and was charged with incitement. He had visited the same disputed border posts that Mr. Chhun had visited in July.

4 September 2020
Kea Sokun, a 22-year-old rapper, was arrested in Siem Reap and charged the next day with incitement. He was arrested while dropping out of a tuk-tuk at Phnom Penh's Freedom Park on his way to a peaceful demonstration calling for the release of Mr. Chhun.

6 September 2020
A former CNRP official, Kong Sam An, was arrested in Tboung Khmum province for unknown reasons.

7 September 2020
Two Khmer Thavarak activists, Tha Lay, and So Metta (also known by Eng Malai) were also arrested. Tha Lay, 19, was arrested while stepping out of a tuk-tuk at Phnom Penh's Freedom Park on his way to a peaceful demonstration calling for the release of Mr. Chhun. So Metta was followed by police from the protest and arrested that evening after leaving the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights. The pair have both been charged with incitement.

20 September 2020
Former CNRP youth activist and Assistant to CNRP's Vice President, Mu Sochua, Oeur Narith, was arrested and subsequently released on bail after signing a contract prohibiting him from meeting with youth or former CNRP officials.

6 August 2020
Brothers Chhum Huot and Chhum Hour, both members of the of the Lover Environment and Society Association, were arrested while protesting for the release of Rong Chhun. They were later released after signing a contract to stop protesting.

13 August 2020
5 members of the activist group Khmer Thavarak, were arrested in one day, Savy Samnang, Yorg Sok Hai and Chea Kunthin were released without charge. The remaining 2 were placed in police custody with charges of incitement, including Hun Vannak, prominent human rights defender and environmental activist.

3 September 2020
At the beginning of September, 3 youth activists belonging to the environmental group Mother Nature Cambodia were arrested after sharing information on social media about their plans to organize a one-person march to the Prime Minister's house to raise environmental concerns over the development of one of the last remaining lakes in Phnom Penh. Long Kunthea, Thu Rath, and Phoung Keo Reaksmeay were also charged with incitement and sent to pre-trial detention. Mr. Rath's arrest took place at his rented property when over 25 guards and police surrounded the property for two hours before making the arrest.

6 September 2020
Khmer Student Intelligent League Association Vice President, Mean Prommony, and Buddhist Monk Venerable Koet Saray, who is also a Khmer Thavarak member, were arrested for planning a peaceful assembly at Freedom Park in Phnom Penh. Venerable Saray was defrocked and the pair were charged with incitement. They remain in pre-trial detention.

9 September 2020
Two more individuals were arrested, Pen Mom, a former CNRP official, and Nel Theurn, a social media user who was charged with incitement for claiming that Angkor Wat does not belong to Khmer.

10 September 2020
Khmer Student Intelligent League Association member, Moung Sophaw, was arrested and charged with incitement after participating in a protest.