**OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN CAMBODIA**

### 2020 TIMELINE

This timeline provides an overview of key events relating to women’s rights in Cambodia during 2020. We acknowledge that the Royal Government of Cambodia has taken a number of positive steps to improve women’s rights in the country, as highlighted throughout, however a number of deeply concerning events have tarnished the year.

#### FEBRUARY
- **17 February:** Thai Sreyneang (a.k.a. Ven Rachna) was arrested and charged with pornography for posting ‘sexy’ photos of herself on her social media to sell clothing for her Facebook-based store. The arrest followed Prime Minister Hun Sen’s speech on the same day at the Cambodian National Council for Women announcing a crackdown on women who wear ‘sexy clothing’ on social media, claiming they were destroying Khmer culture and provoking sexual violence.
- **25 February:** The Ministry of Women’s Affairs announced plans to form an inter-ministerial group to ‘educate’ women who post ‘sexy’ photos on their social media.

#### MARCH
- **6 March:** Prime Minister Hun Sen announced an increase in the legal aid budget by 500 million Riels per year to assist poor women and girl victims access the justice system.
- **8 March:** While communities and civil society were able to celebrate International Women’s Day, celebrations were surveilled by authorities. Some communities in the provinces raised that they were threatened by authorities in the lead up to their planned events. Further, at one joint civil society event at Freedom Park authorities arbitrarily limited the permitted size of tents, forcing participants to sit or stand in the sun, despite prior approval from Phnom Penh City Hall.
- **30 March:** The Ministry of Women’s Affairs published a list of judicial officials that victims of domestic violence could contact for advice.

#### APRIL & MAY
- **24 April:** Thai Sreyneang was convicted on the pornography charges and sentenced to six months imprisonment, with the remainder of her sentence suspended.
- **12 May:** Former CNRP activist Srey Meas was violent attacked by an unknown assailant, who left her unconscious with a severe head wound.

#### JUNE
- **June:** The Ministry of Women’s Affairs signed a new five year gender strategic plan - the Neary Rattanak 5.
- **8 June:** The Ministry of Women’s Affairs provided training to 25 judicial police officials from eight provinces on basic counselling for women and children victims of violence.

#### JULY
- **July:** The Ministry of Interior’s draft Law on Public Order was leaked containing provisions that could severely exacerbate discrimination against women, including regulating their clothing choices and undermining their personal autonomy.
- **30 July:** Four women police officers filed a complaint to the Ministry of Interior against Kampong Thom police commissioner Ouk Kosal for sexual abuse harassment, alleging he forced them into sexual acts by threatening their careers.
5 August: Authorities blocked and pushed peaceful protesters who gathered at Olympic Market calling for the release of Rong Chhun. They seriously injured two women: one sustained a leg injury, the other suffered an ankle injury.

10 August: Ouk Chhayavy, President of Cambodian Independent Teachers Association, was violently attacked and knocked off her moto by two assailants after visiting detained union leader Rong Chhun. She sustained serious injuries requiring stitches.

13 August: Authorities violently dispersed a protest conducted by Khmer Thavrak, consisting mainly of women. The police pushed, kicked, and pulled the activists' hair. Activist Chhouen Daravy was arrested, beaten, and forcibly pushed into a car.

3 September: Two women Mother Nature Activists - Long Kunthea and Phuon Keo Reaksmy - were arrested alongside another activist after sharing information on social media about plans to organize a one-woman march calling for the protection of Boeng Tamok Lake.

4 September: Authorities violently dispersed women protesters calling for the release of detained CNRP activists, seriously injuring one and harming four more.

7 September: Khmer Thavrak activist So Metta (a.k.a Eng Malai) was followed by police after participating in a protest and arrested after leaving the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Phnom Penh.

9 September: Investigations revealed police chief Ouk Kosal was guilty of sexual abuse of the four female police officers. He received a simple demotion, and no criminal charges, reportedly in order to 'protect the victims dignity'.

26 September: Seng Chanthorn was hurled to the ground by security guards while peacefully calling for the release of her detained husband. She was severely injured and rushed to hospital. The authorities issued a statement acknowledging the violence and saying they had reprimanded the guard, but there was no criminal investigation or proceedings on the use of force.

10 October: Prime Minister Hun Sen approved the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women for 2019 - 2023, which is planned to be launched by end of November 2020.

23 October: Authorities dispersed protesters in front of the Chinese Embassy, who were calling for China to respect the spirit of the Paris Peace Agreements. The police pushed and shoved protesters, forced them into cars, and forcefully dragged one woman down the street with each officer holding one limb.

3 November 2020: Sok Bolyma, the wife of a detained former CNRP official was attacked by three unknown assailants, who drove into her motor bike, leaving her with a seriously injured foot.