

# TIMELINE OF EVENTS OF THE NAGAWORLD STRIKE

March - April 2022

The mass lay-offs conducted by the NagaWorld casino in April 2021 were marked by blatant **labor rights and union rights violations**, which resulted in several hundred employees rejecting their termination. Labor Rights Supported Union of Khmer Employees of NagaWorld (LRSU) members and workers started a peaceful strike in mid-December to demand a **fair resolution** to the **labor dispute** – including employee reinstatement and proper compensation for former employees - and **better respect for workers' rights and for labor legislation** by the casino.

The timeline below is the continuation of a previous timeline and provides an overview of the main events pertaining to the ongoing NagaWorld strike in **March and April 2022**. The strike continued to be tainted by rights abuses and to be marked by the strikers' unwavering determination to **advocate for their labor rights** until an adequate settlement is found.



## MARCH 2022

The Phnom Penh Appeal Court **denied the bail** requests of the **eight LRSU representatives** detained since January 2022. A few days later, after spending **over 70 days in detention**, the union leaders were all **released on bail** on 14 and 17 March following the Government's intervention to allow negotiations to resume.

On 14 March, the **Labor Ministry recognized a newly created trade union** at NagaWorld, which was seen by the strikers as a means to **undermine** their rights and influence.

On 16 March, the Government also issued a **statement** reiterating its order to stop the strike due to COVID-19. The statement also **warned the strikers** that they would be deemed to have violated government COVID-19 safety regulations, would be "peacefully" removed, and **risks losing their benefits** if they continued to strike.

LRSU leaders and company representatives met for the **second time** to resume negotiations to settle the long-standing labor dispute. Union leaders later expressed **disappointment** with the company for **sidestepping their demands** and sticking to their original compensation offer.

After a break due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 156 NagaWorld strikers attempted to **resume their peaceful strike** in front of the NagaWorld building on 11 March. Deployed police forces violently **shoved them into buses** and took them to the Prek Pnov quarantine facility. The strikers were allowed to leave the facility that afternoon. Many reported having suffered **injuries** due to **police brutality**. Similarly, from 13 to 17 March, hundreds of NagaWorld strikers continued to gather in front of the casino and to be confronted by deployed security forces. Authorities reportedly **hit, punched, and dragged the strikers**, including pregnant women, to get them into the buses before they were taken to the quarantine center.

**Negotiations resumed** between NagaWorld, LRSU leaders, and the Labor Ministry, but were **unfruitful**. Meanwhile, over a hundred strikers continued their gathering attempts and were once again shoved into buses. This time, they were **taken to Freedom Park** located on the capital's outskirts and **held for several hours in the buses** before being allowed to disembark in the evening.

From 20 to 31 March, the NagaWorld strikers continued to gather almost daily to resume their peaceful strike but were prevented from doing so by the authorities. They continued to be **rounded-up, brutally pushed into buses, and driven to the city's outskirts** to be kept away from the casino.

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On 22 March, the LRSU representatives said they would **boycott the third round of negotiations** because the casino was refusing to consider their demands. On 23 March, four union leaders ended up meeting with NagaWorld and the Labor Ministry. **LRSU President Chhim Sithar** was however **absent**. A majority of the members voted against continuing the negotiations as both the company and the Labor Ministry were unwilling to discuss the reinstatement of terminated workers.



A **fourth round** of negotiations took place between the NagaWorld casino, LRSU leaders, and the Labor Ministry with **no progress made**.

Five activists from the **Khmer Thravrak youth group** submitted a **petition** to the **Interior Ministry** and the **Women's Affairs Ministry** to seek their intervention in addressing the violence and **sexual harassment** committed by authorities against female NagaWorld strikers.



119 NagaWorld strikers attempted to peacefully gather again outside the Nagaworld casino. Hundreds of Phnom Penh **authorities were deployed** to prevent the strike outside the building, instead **pushing the strikers into waiting buses**. The strikers were transported to the capital's outskirts and dropped off at Freedom park a few hours later.



A **sixth negotiation** meeting took place between NagaWorld, LRSU leaders, and the Labor Ministry. The leaders continued to ask for the reinstatement of 200 laid-off employees **without success**.

From 26 to 30 April, the strikers continued their attempts to resume the strike in front NagaWorld but were **confronted by authorities** and **taken away from the casino**.



On **Labor Day**, the NagaWorld labor dispute remains **unresolved**. The Cambodian Government continues to deny the NagaWorld strikers their fundamental right to strike, thus hampering their efforts to **demand better respect for labor rights**.

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**APRIL 2022**

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After the strikers took to social media to denounce the authorities' excessive use of force when pushing them into the buses, the Phnom Penh City Hall released a **statement** declaring that the pictures and videos of police violence against the strikers shared on social media were **"fake news."** The statement also **shamed the female strikers** for their behavior considered "not suitable for Khmer women" and in turn **accused the strikers** of being the **instigators of violence**.



On 1 April, 158 NagaWorld strikers were met with **barricades** and **security forces blocking them** from approaching the casino to resume their peaceful strike. **Human rights monitors** and **observers** were also **ordered to stay away** from the site. On the next day, authorities and plainclothes officers continued to force 135 NagaWorld strikers to board buses to prevent them from gathering outside the company building. They were **taken far away from the casino** and dropped off at Freedom Park. Many strikers reported experiencing **physical pain** and having multiples bruises on their bodies due to the **authorities' continued use of force** against them.



A **fifth round of negotiations** took place to no avail. The NagaWorld casino stood its ground and refused to accept the reinstatement of 200 laid-off workers - including top unionists - that the LRSU had been demanding.



Following a nine-day break due to Khmer New Year celebrations and the failed negotiations, 106 NagaWorld strikers gathered in front of the casino in another attempt to **resume their peaceful strike**. Shortly after arriving near the Australian Embassy in the early afternoon, they strikers were **violently forced into buses** and driven to the Choy Changva zoo on the city's outskirts before being dropped off near Freedom Park a few hours later. On 20 and 21 April 2022, 119 and 136 NagaWorld strikers respectively, were **prevented from striking** in the same way.

