Freedom of expression – January to December 2021 (Year Six)

The Fundamental Freedoms Monitoring Project (FFMP) systematically monitors the ability of Cambodians to exercise the freedoms of association, expression and assembly. This dashboard presents the key findings on the freedom of expression from the FFMP’s Sixth Annual Report. In 2021, the FFMP recorded 140 restrictions to freedom of expression, 96 of which amounted to violations of the right.

**77% of the restrictions on the freedom of expression in 2021 occurred online.**

![Graph showing percentage of restrictions online: Year 3 - 33%, Year 4 - 43%, Year 5 - 52%, Year 6 - 77%]

*This increased percentage of online restrictions likely indicates a growing intolerance by the RGC of online speech and is likely the result of the RGC’s increased surveillance of online platforms.*

**Press freedom is increasingly restricted: journalists are targeted for reporting on sensitive issues.**

33 restrictions to the freedom of expression targeted journalists.

42% of those restrictions related to journalists reporting on land issues.

27% of those restrictions related to journalists reporting on COVID-19 issues.

6 media licenses were revoked for their coverage of COVID-19 issues.

**Less than half of Public Poll respondents felt free to speak openly on social media.**

![Graph showing percentage of respondents feeling free to speak openly on social media: Year 2 - 55%, Year 3 - 37%, Year 4 - 29%, Year 5 - 28%, Year 6 - 47%]

Rates of self-censorship remain high, demonstrating a limitation of the exercise of freedom of expression.

**A significant percentage of the Cambodian public believe that domestic laws related to the freedom of expression are more restrictive than they are.**

![Graph showing percentage of respondents who correctly answered that...]

- 88% believe it is illegal to insult public figures
- 67% believe it is illegal to discuss politics
- 51% believe it is legal to criticize RGC policies
- 51% believe it is legal to discuss politics
- 62% believe it is legal to discuss politics

**28% of respondents believe it is illegal to discuss politics whereas 43% believe it is illegal to criticize the RGC. This trend constrains freedom of expression as many individuals believe they cannot engage in political discourse, which is essential for democracy to flourish.**

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