Press Freedom in Cambodia in 2017–2018

Shutdowns, sanctions & suspensions of media outlets

AUGUST 2017

× 32 radio broadcasts were shuttered, in particular those relaying critical Khmer-language news from Radio Free Asia (RFA), Voice of America (VOA) and Voice of Democracy (VOD).

SEPTEMBER 2017

× The Cambodia Daily was shut down after being given a USD$6.3 million tax-bill.

× Radio Free Asia (RFA) decided to close its Phnom Penh bureau and in-country operations, citing "the government’s relentless crackdown on independent voices" as the reason.

× The website of the Cambodia Daily was blocked arbitrarily.

Legal actions taken against journalists

5 journalists summoned
9 journalists questioned
20 journalists arrested
15 journalists detained
12 journalists charged
2 journalists convicted

Two former Radio Free Asia (RFA) reporters, Yeang Sothearin and Oun Chhin, arrested in November 2017, remain in pre-trial detention, on charges of "espionage" for allegedly working as RFA reporters in Cambodia – despite the fact that RFA was never banned. They face up to seven to 15 years in prison. The two have additionally been charged with “producing pornography” in March 2018, which carries a sentence of up to one year in prison.

All data collected from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. Source: CCHR Media Monitoring
Legal Standards on Freedom of Expression & Press Freedom

**Domestic Law**

**The Constitution**

"Khmer citizens shall have freedom to expression of their ideas." (art. 41)

**The Press Law**

- Freedom of the press and freedom of publication is guaranteed in conformity with articles 31 & 41 of the Constitution. (art. 1)
- The right to freedom from pre-publication censorship. (art. 3)
- The publication of official information may not be penalized if such publication is fully true or and accurate summary of the truth. (art. 4)
- No person shall be arrested or subject to criminal charges for the expression of opinions. (art. 20)

**International Human Rights Law**

**The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

- Requires States Parties to guarantee the right to freedom of expression, including the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice. (art. 19)

The right to freedom of expression may only be subject to restrictions that are:
- provided by law, and
- necessary
- for (a) respect of the rights or reputations of others, or (b) the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals.