Cambodia sees rise in abuse of women during pandemic

'One in five women in Cambodia had suffered violence’, says human rights body

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Women in Cambodia witnessed a rise in rights abuse and violence during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a human rights body said.

“In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic [...] we see that there seems to have been a turning point – more women face increasing violence because so many of them work at home rather than outside,” Chak Sopheap, executive director Cambodia Centre for Human Rights (CCHR), said in a report released on Dec. 6.

The CCHR found “one in five women in Cambodia had suffered violence”. Those who perpetrated the violence included partners, family members, colleagues, acquaintances or public officials, daily The Phnom Penh Post reported on Wednesday.

“The rate of incidence has risen during the COVID-19 pandemic,” the report maintained.
“The gender-based violence occurs predominantly against women and is rooted in gender inequality, abuse of power and harmful cultural norms,” the report said, adding that most incidents of violence against women involved domestic abuse, sexual assaults and human trafficking.

The rights group urged the government to “fulfill its obligation of promoting, protecting and respecting human rights across the country, especially taking measures to protect women’s rights and promote gender equality.”

Sopheap said: “We know that when it comes to women’s rights, there is, everywhere, an insufficient commitment to acknowledging the value of women. Obviously, women continue to suffer from all manners of violence.”

She asked the government officials to “take concrete actions to promote women’s rights in society and implement measures to eliminate discrimination and use of violence against women in all forms.”

Meanwhile, the Southeast Asian kingdom is holding mass testing of people to determine the coronavirus cases after many people tested positive during a public event held late last month.

One of the least affected countries, Cambodia has reported a total of 354 COVID-19 cases, including four deaths.