

Joint statement

Stop Escalating Crackdown on LRSU Strikers

25 March 2022

Authorities have alarmingly escalated the use of violence and mass detention of union members in front of NagaWorld casino in recent weeks, as well as increasing restrictions placed on human rights monitors and journalists covering the authorities' worsening crackdown. We, the undersigned civil society groups, urge the government to de-escalate the situation and stop the repeated intimidation of strikers, including driving them to various areas far from the city center and leaving them stranded there late at night.

We are concerned by recent actions from authorities prohibiting human rights monitors and journalists from observing the continued use of violence against peaceful strikers, most of whom are women. On multiple occasions, authorities have barred human rights monitors and journalists from taking photographs or standing near the site of these heavy-handed detentions. Journalists have been threatened with arrest for covering the strike, and in several cases authorities have pushed monitors and journalists away as authorities violently drag strikers onto buses. They have also threatened to detain monitors alongside strikers at Covid-19 quarantine centers.

In some cases, authorities have forced monitors to delete photographs and videos of the incidents – further showing that these abusive arrests are a source of shame, and are not justified under domestic or international law. If observers continue to be restricted, we fear that there may be a further increase in violence and abuse during this crackdown.

In addition, in recent days authorities have put strikers into city buses and driven them to the outskirts of the city, dropping them off and forcing them to arrange and pay for their own transport home. This is entirely arbitrary and serves only to punish workers without any legal justification, reasoning or authority.

Women strikers from LRSU have also been targeted with violence, sexual harassment, imprisonment, and arbitrary application of COVID-19 measures in response to their peaceful strike since December 2021. On 29 December 2021, in an incident captured on video, authorities used vulgar sexual language toward a striker and threatened to sexually assault her. On 22 February, a male officer grabbed and squeezed the breast of one striker as she was being forced onto a bus. On 22 March, a woman striker was hit in the eye by authorities while being detained. These actions are unacceptable.

LRSU has conducted their strike peacefully and within the framework of Cambodian and international law, which guarantees the rights to assembly and free association. Yet the government's response to the strike has been to arrest 11 union members, activists and leaders on trumped-up charges, which still hang over their heads despite their release on bail. Authorities have also regularly arrested and temporarily detained hundreds of additional LRSU strikers on a near-daily basis, arbitrarily sending them to Covid-19 quarantine centers or, more recently, dropping them off in remote areas of the city.

We call on authorities to de-escalate this situation and to take genuine steps toward resolving the dispute, including ensuring that NagaWorld participates in negotiations in good faith and in alignment with Cambodian law.

This joint statement endorsed by:

1. 197 Land Community (Koh Kong)
2. Affiliated Network for Social Accountability (ANSA)
3. Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT)
4. Am Leang Community (Kampong Speu)
5. Andong Trabek Land Community (Svay Rieng)
6. Areng Indigenous Community (Koh Kong)
7. Association of Domestic Workers (ADW)
8. Building and Wood Workers Trade Union Federation of Cambodia (BWTUC)
9. Boeung Pram Community (Battambang)
10. Bos Snor Community (Tbong Khmum)
11. Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU)
12. Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)
13. Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)
14. Cambodian Food and Service Workers' Federation (CFSWF)
15. Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)
16. Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
17. Cambodia's Independent Civil Servants Association (CICA)
18. Cambodian Informal Economy Workers Association (CIWA-CLC)
19. Cambodian Labor Confederation (CLC)
20. Cambodian Tourism Workers Union Federation (CTWUF)
21. Cambodian Journalists Alliance (CamboJA)
22. Chi Kha Kraom Land Community (Koh Kong)
23. Chi Kha Leu Land Community (Koh Kong)
24. Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability (CISA)
25. Coalition of Cambodian Farmers Community Association (CCFC)
26. Community to Protect Nature (Pursat)
27. Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL)
28. Cambodian Youth Network (CYN)
29. Dak Por Community (Kampong Speu)
30. Equitable Cambodia (EC)
31. Gender and Development Cambodia (GADC)
32. Haong Samnam Community (Kampong Speu)
33. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
34. Independent Trade Union Federation (INTUFE)
35. Kamprers community (Tboung Khmum)
36. Khmer Student Intelligent League Association (KSILA)
37. Khmer Thavrak
38. Klaing Toek 78 Community (Siemreap)

39. Koh Sralao Fishery Community (Koh Kong)
40. Kouy Indigenous Community (Preah Vihear)
41. Labour Right Supported Union Khmer Employee of Nagaworld (L.R.S.U)
42. Lor Peang Community (Kampong Chhnang)
43. Mean Chey Land Community (Svay Rieng)
44. Neutral and Impartial Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (NICFEC)
45. Peace Bridges Organization (PBO)
46. Peam Ros Community (Kampong Speu)
47. People Center for Development and Peace (PDP)
48. Phnom Krom Community (Siemreap)
49. Phnom Tnaut Community (Kampot)
50. Phum Sela Khmer Land Community (Banteay Meanchey)
51. Ponlok Khmer (PKH)
52. Prek Ksach Land Community (Koh Kong)
53. Prey Chher Pech Changvar Laor Chhert Community (Kampong Chhnang)
54. Prey Lang Community (Stung Treng)
55. Prey Lang Community (Kampong Thom)
56. Prey Peay Fishery Community (Kampot)
57. Ou Vor Preng Community (Battambang)
58. Reaksmei Sameakki Community (Kampong Speu)
59. Samaki Chek Meas Community (Svay Rieng)
60. Solidarity House (SH)
61. Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (STT)
62. Sre Ampel Water Fall Tourism Forestry Community (Kampong Chhnang)
63. Sre Prang Community (Tboung Khmum)
64. Steung Khsach Sor Forestry Resource (Kampong Chhnang)
65. Ta Ni Land Community (Siemreap)
66. Ta Noun Land Community (Koh Kong)
67. The Cambodian NGO Committee on CEDAW (NGO-CEDAW)
68. Thmar Da Community (Pursat)
69. Tonlung Community (Tboung Khmum)
70. Transparency International Cambodia (TI)
71. Trapeang Chour Community (Kampong Speu)
72. Youth Resources Development Program (YRDP)