

Press Release:

Growing Concerns Over Journalist Safety in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, 31 March 2025 — The media landscape in Cambodia continues to deteriorate as journalists face increasing threats, legal persecution, and violence for carrying out their work.

In 2024, CamboJA documented 41 cases of harassment against at least 64 journalists, highlighting an intensifying crackdown on press freedom. The most common form of harassment was legal intimidation, with 28 recorded incidents, including arrests, lawsuits, charges, detentions, and media license revocations. At least five journalists were placed in pretrial detention or sentenced simply for performing their duties.

Physical violence against journalists also persisted, with six cases involving threats, assaults on equipment, and personal attacks—including the tragic killing of journalist Chhoeung Chheng in Siem Reap province.

Journalists also faced seven cases of intimidation and discrimination, deliberately creating unsafe and unwelcoming.

Those reporting on deforestation and environmental issues were the most frequently targeted, experiencing 16 cases of harassment, followed by journalists covering land disputes (7 cases). The report also found that state actors were responsible for 26 of the recorded incidents, highlighting a pattern of suppression aimed at silencing critical voices.

CamboJA strongly condemns these ongoing attacks on press freedom and calls on the Cambodian government to take urgent action by:

- Investigating all cases of harassment against journalists.
- Holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring they face legal consequences.
- Creating a safe environment where journalists can work without fear of intimidation, violence, or legal reprisals.

CamboJA's Executive Director, Nop Vy, stated: *"Without independent media, journalists face growing challenges in holding those in power accountable, and the public's access to credible information becomes increasingly restricted. Without a free press, the Cambodian people have fewer reliable sources to uncover the truth and challenge authority."*

At the same time, Cambodia’s independent media sector is rapidly shrinking. The uncertainty surrounding Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA)—due to a funding halt by the U.S. government—marks a significant blow to press freedom and public access to information.

For decades, these news services have been vital sources of accurate and reliable information for Cambodians, especially in an environment where press freedom is under attack. Shutting down these critical platforms would deprive Cambodians of credible news and weaken efforts to uphold democratic values and human rights.

CamboJA also urges the U.S. government to reverse its decision and restore the operations of Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA).

CamboJA stands in solidarity with journalists in Cambodia and will continue to advocate for their safety as well as preserve press freedom.

For more information, please contact:

Nop Vy, Executive Director of Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA)

Phone: (+855) 12 519 261 (Signal)

Email: ed@camboja.net (English and Khmer)

Full report: <https://www.camboja.net/advocacy/reports/annual-report/cambodian-journalism-situation-report-2024/>