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Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association



Journalism Situation in Cambodia

Quarterly Monitoring Report

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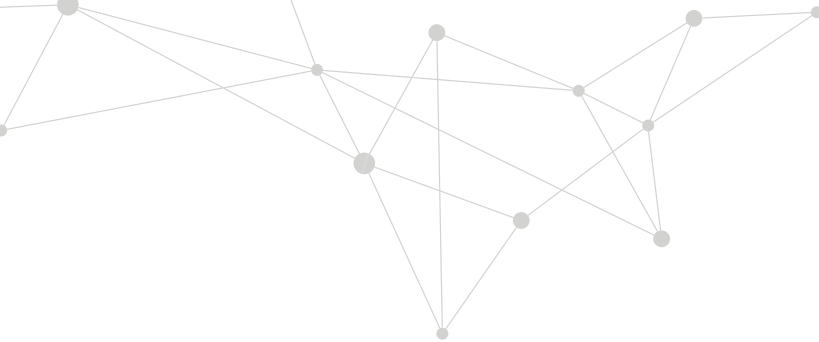
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The monitoring methodology that informs this report was developed in close collaboration with Dr Sara Torsner, a Journalism Safety Researcher in the United Kingdom. We extend our gratitude to Dr Torsner for her valuable advisory role in shaping both the methodology and the overall development of this report



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I. Introduction and Summary

CamboJA's quarterly reports continue to show that press freedom in Cambodia remains under severe pressure. Authorities are intensifying efforts to combat purported "fake news" and dismiss critical reporting as "incitement information". Restrictions on independent journalism and self-censorship among journalists have increased following the eruption of violent conflict in July regarding the Cambodia-Thailand border conflict.¹

During the reporting period (July-September), CamboJA also observed several political and social developments that have the potential to directly or indirectly harm freedom of expression and press freedom. On the political level, the adoption of the amended Nationality Law has given authorities broad powers to revoke citizenship from individuals convicted of treason or collusion with foreign powers.² This provision has raised concerns about its potential use against government critics, particularly those with international networks, including journalists and civil society actors. The Nationality Law is also understood by observers to be part of a broader pattern of shrinking space for political opposition.³

Concerns over national security related to reporting on the Cambodia-Thailand border conflict have also led to the imposition of additional restrictions on the press freedom. Journalists are now instructed to inform or seek advance permission from authorities before reporting in the border areas where the conflict between Cambodia and Thailand occurred. At least 16 journalists were arbitrarily interrogated/ summoned, arrested and detained, charged, and banned from reporting on the border conflict. This includes two cases where journalists were charged and detained pre-trial. These actions severely restricted the free flow of factual information vital to the public interest.

The intensifying restriction on civic space was also observed and highlighted by the UK's Human Rights Ambassador, Eleanor Sanders, who urged Cambodia to implement the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, particularly those aimed at strengthening judicial independence and allowing civil society to operate freely.⁴ Sanders emphasized that inclusive dialogue and stakeholder participation in the upcoming local and national elections in Cambodia (in 2027 and 2028) are essential to build legitimacy and stability. The statement also highlighted that a free press, active civil society, and respect for freedom of expression are vital to reinforcing democratic principles, promoting long-term prosperity, and enhancing Cambodia's international reputation.⁵

¹<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/articles/20251031/203/index.html?khmer>

²<https://cambojanews.com/national-assembly-passes-amendment-to-nationality-law-to-strip-khmer-citizenship-amid-calls-by-csos-to-drop-draft/>

³<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=550>

⁴<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/10/cambodia-un-expert-alarmed-disturbing-human-rights-situation>

⁵<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/un-human-rights-council-60-uk-statement-for-the-interactive-dialogue-with-the-special-rapporteur-on-cambodia>

The long-awaited Access to Information (A2I) draft law remain in limbo as the Ministry of Information said it is prioritizing a Press Law in an effort to combat fake news. According to a ministry spokesperson, the A2I draft is currently under review by the Ministry of Justice before moving on to the next stage — a process that remains unclear.⁶ Media organizations and CSOs are urging the government to adopt the A2I draft law, which would ensure the right of people to access public information.

Rising nationalism, further inflamed by the ongoing Cambodia-Thailand border dispute, has also been observed to contribute to a more hostile environment for those perceived as aligning with external agendas. CamboJA notes that this trend could result in additional pressures on independent journalists covering sensitive cross-border issues. These challenges further accelerate the shrinking of civic space in the country, intensifying restrictions on freedom of expression and press freedom.

CamboJA's quarterly monitoring reports on violations against journalists form part of our continued efforts to document and analyze Cambodia's media environment. These reports aim to provide stakeholders with evidence-based insights that can support advocacy, raise awareness, and guide policy reform to protect journalists and promote a free and safe media space in Cambodia.

Findings from the third quarter of 2025 (July-September) highlight ongoing challenges to media freedom, the rule of law, and fundamental human rights in the country. In this period, CamboJA documented 23 instances of violations against journalists and media outlet, all directly related to journalistic activities. The cases documented range from instances of physical security, legal harassment (license revocation), arbitrary summons/interrogation, and detention.

Most of the violations documented this quarter were allegedly perpetrated by state actors, including by local, provincial, and national-level authorities. This pattern reflects a broader problem of impunity, where violations against journalists are perpetrated by state actors who often remain unpunished. This cycle of injustice erodes trust in the justice system and enables continued abuse while many journalists chose not to report violations due to fear of retaliation, a lack of trust in authorities, or the belief that no meaningful action would be taken.

These violations, documented by CamboJA, not only infringed Cambodia's constitutional protections of press and media freedom - particularly Article 41 which states that Khmer citizens shall have freedom of expression, press, publication and assembly.⁷

⁶<https://cambojanews.com/a2i-draft-law-delayed-as-government-revises-press-fake-news-laws/>

⁷https://cambodia.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Constitution_ENG.pdf

The violations also contravened international standards under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), including basic rights to freedom of expression, physical security, justice and due process and liberty.⁸

The documented violations have resulted in severe consequences for individual journalists, resulting in restrictions on movement, damage to professional standing, forced admissions of wrongdoing or publication under duress, and internal relocation.

Media outlets have also suffered adverse consequences, including content removal and outlet shutdowns. The findings reveal a pattern similar to those observed in the first and second quarters of 2025. This pattern of intimidation contributes to a climate of fear, leading to increased self-censorship among journalists and a chilling effect on public discourse, highlighting yet again the urgent need for systemic reforms to safeguard press freedom and ensure Cambodia fulfills its national and international obligations under human rights law.

The continued use of arbitrary legal threats and actions to intimidate journalists and suppress critical reporting highlights a concerning pattern of legal intimidation. As previously highlighted by CamboJA, authorities are resorting to criminal charges, such as incitement and treason against journalists covering sensitive issues, instead of utilizing the civil remedies outlined in the Cambodian Press Law. This approach runs counter to international standards that protect freedom of expression. Such censorship and restrictions on journalistic work hinder the free flow of ideas, limit public access to information, and undermine meaningful participation in public discourse.

Despite the mounting challenges facing free and independent journalism, CamboJA remains committed to producing and fostering fact-based, unbiased reporting. We believe it is crucial to shed light on the challenges that make pursuing this work so difficult for our fellow colleagues. CamboJA hopes to foster an environment that reflects the constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression and speech in Cambodia, allowing all journalists to carry out their work without fear for their safety, or the safety of those around them.

⁸ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

II. Methodology

For the purpose of this report, monitoring is understood as the systematic process of observing, documenting, and analyzing the range of threats and attacks targeting journalists in the course of their professional activities. These violations encompass a broad spectrum of aggressions, including killings, imprisonment, physical violence, verbal abuse, intimidation, harassment, and gender-based violence, directed at journalists specifically because of their work. Such violations can occur in both online and offline environments and may also take the form of hybrid threats, combining elements from both digital and physical spaces.

These actions are not only harmful to individual journalists but are intended to intimidate, obstruct, or silence them, ultimately threatening the ability of media professionals and institutions to operate safely, freely, and independently. The methodology underpinning this report recognizes that any such actions, whether direct or systemic, can have a chilling effect on press freedom and represent serious violations of journalists' fundamental human rights.

A human right-based monitoring methodology

The methodology and data collection in this report is grounded in a human rights-based approach to documenting threats and attacks against the safety of journalists. This approach recognizes that such acts are not only assaults on individual journalists but also violations of fundamental rights that underpin inclusive and democratic societies.

Accordingly, the methodology aligns with international human rights standards, including the protection of freedom of expression, access to information, and other core rights such as the rights to life, security, and dignity, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Central to this approach is the understanding of the responsibility of the state to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights in line with international human rights law.

Threats and attacks targeting journalists and media organizations for their professional activities are understood as violations of the right to freedom of expression, which also implicates the public's right to receive information. A central feature of this monitoring framework is therefore its focus on documenting violations of the right to freedom of expression, and related violations of other civil and political rights essential to journalists' ability to work freely and safely. Such other rights include:

- The right to life
- Protection from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment
- The right to liberty and security of the person, including protection from arbitrary detention
- The right to an effective remedy
- The right to a fair trial
- Protection from arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy
- The right to equality and non-discrimination

The methodology of this report therefore documents threats and attacks against journalists as violations of both the fundamental right to freedom of expression and a broader set of civil and political rights, as exemplified above.

The methodology also follows UNESCO's Journalists' Safety Indicators (JSIs) and the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (UNAP), which are key international frameworks for assessing journalist safety across its interconnected legal, physical, psychological, online, and gender-based dimensions. Drawing on these frameworks, the monitoring approach adopts a gender- and context-sensitive lens to document threats and attacks on journalists as human rights violations.

Who/what is included in the data?

An inclusive definitional approach of a journalist/journalism as described in international human rights provisions is adopted to cover:

1. individuals engaged in journalistic activities to inform society of matters in the public interest
2. acts targeting such individuals as a result of these journalistic activities that constitute breaches of fundamental human rights

Classification of human rights violations

The methodology covers seven types of human rights violations including violations against the rights to: life, physical security, physical liberty, psychological integrity, justice, and due process and liberty, as well as other types of violations against freedom of expression.

These human rights violations are furthermore classified into types of acts corresponding to human rights violations. Controlled vocabulary developed for the purpose of systematically categorizing and sub-categorizing violation types is grounded in human rights standards and draws on a combination of sources including the UN International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS),⁹ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 16.10,¹⁰ and key human rights provisions.¹¹

It can be noted that a violation-event targeting a journalist may involve several types of human rights violations (e.g., detention and physical abuse). For the purpose of statistically classifying a violation-case CamboJA documents what is understood to be the most serious type of human rights violation (primary violation). Information about secondary or interrelated violations suffered by the same journalist are captured in qualitative records.

Data collection and verification

Data on violations against journalists for this report was collected using a combination of primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gathered through interviews with victims, their family members, and eyewitnesses, and verified through desk-based reviews. Secondary sources included media coverage, social media content, and official court announcements.

To ensure accuracy, all data underwent a verification process involving cross-checking with multiple sources and consistency reviews. In cases where journalists were accused of extortion, CamboJA categorized these as instances of human rights violations only after conducting independent investigations that revealed evidence of threats, intimidation, or other actions aimed at undermining press freedom.

Due to the safety and security concerns, names of affected journalists and other sources have been withheld from this report if not published widely elsewhere.

Scope and limitations

This report includes only those cases of violations against journalists that were identified through CamboJA's documentation and monitoring efforts. It may therefore be the case that this report does not capture all violation incidents that occurred in Cambodia during the reporting period of July to September 2025. It is likely that many additional cases went unreported, particularly in provincial areas where journalists often face harassment without access to adequate monitoring, legal support, or protection mechanisms. As a result, the findings presented here should be understood as a partial but indicative reflection of broader trends and risks facing journalists in Cambodia.

⁹The International Crime Classifications is a framework to systematically classify and categorise different types of crime for the purpose of data collection, analysis, and international comparison. It provides a standardized methodology for classifying crimes which supports data comparability. The cases included in this report fall within international crime classifications including censorship (ICCS 08031), arbitrary detention (ICCS 020222), legal harassment (ICCS 0806), discrimination (ICCS 0210), and assault (ICCS 02011).

¹⁰Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 16.10.1 measures enjoyment of fundamental rights covering: 'Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights defenders in the previous 12 months.' See: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/SDG_Indicator_16_10_1_Guidance_Note.pdf

¹¹These human rights provisions include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)

Freedom of expression is a cornerstone of democratic society. It ensures individuals can share opinions, access information, and hold power to account without fear of censorship or retaliation. When journalism is censored or restricted, it constitutes a direct violation of this fundamental right, as guaranteed under Article 19 of both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. (UDHR, Article 19, ICCPR, Article 19(1);19(2))

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom 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.
3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
 - (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;
 - (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (order public), or of public health or morals.

III. Key Findings

From July to September 2025, CamboJA documented 23 instances of human rights violations targeting journalists and media outlets (Affecting 22 journalists and one media outlet). The 23 recorded violations occurred in connection with 11 separate incidents, meaning that multiple journalists or media outlets were exposed to human rights violations in connection with the same incident or news reporting event.

This marks a 130% increase in the total number of human rights violations compared to the previous quarter, when 10 violations were recorded in connection to eight separate incidents.

Of the 23 violations, 21 cases were instances of legal intimidation. Legal violations accounted for 91% of the recorded total of violations (see Table 1). The legal intimidations recorded in this quarter represent a 250% increase compared to the previous quarter when there were six legal violations recorded.

The misuse of legal mechanisms to silence journalism continues to be a dominant trend in the period with 14 instances of arbitrary interrogation/summons, 2 cases of pre-trial detention, 4 cases of detention as well as one instance of a legal harassment in the form of a license revocation.



Journalists covered the Cambodia–Thailand border conflict in Prey Chan village on October 13, 2025. (Photo supplied)

The increase in violations this quarter was driven by restriction on reporting on the Cambodia-Thailand border conflict, where authorities invoke national security concern as a justification. In total, 16 violations were documented by CamboJA as directly related to the cross-border conflict and authorities’ effort to control reporting.

The journalists exposed to violations in the third quarter are reporters, photographers, editors, producers, fixers, and publishers. A majority of affected journalists worked for online media outlets. Two of the targeted journalists were of foreign nationality, one Japanese and one American working for Japanese news agencies, The Sankei Shimbun and Nikkei. Four journalists exposed to violations were local journalists who work for international news agencies, including AFP, Nikkei and the European Pressphoto Agency. The remaining 17 journalists were from local online media.

Five of the journalists targeted in this quarter had previously been exposed to human rights abuse.

As shown in Table 1, the violations documented in the period cover three key safety dimensions: legal, physical, and psychological safety.

Table 2 breaks down the types and frequency of human rights violations and acts

TABLE 1: BREAKDOWN OF VIOLATIONS BY SAFETY DIMENSIONS

Safety Dimension	Number of Violations	Number of incidents
Legal safety	21	9
Physical safety	1	1
Psychological safety	1	1
Total	23	11

recorded during the period. As shown, four key types of human rights violations occurred, including violations of the rights to: physical security; psychological integrity; justice; and due process and liberty. As shown in Table 2, the most common violation type affecting journalists compromises rights to due process and liberty.

TABLE 2. TYPES AND FREQUENCY OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND ACTS RECORDED

Type of human rights violation	Acts included	Type of act	
Right to physical security	Acts connected to journalistic activity causing (attack) bodily harm or intending to (threat) cause bodily harm.	Threat of physical harm	1
Right to justice	Arbitrary legal acts intended to discourage, restrict or control journalistic expression.	Legal harassment	1
Right to due process and liberty	Arbitrary legal acts against liberty intended to discourage, restrict or control journalistic expression.	Summons/ Interrogation	14
		Pre-Trial detention	2
		Detention	4
Right to psychological integrity	Acts connected to journalistic activity which intended to induce fear or emotional distress	Intimidation	1
Total			23

One violation against the right to physical security was documented in an incident where a foreign journalist was threatened with physical harm when taken into a room by a group of Chinese men for questioning while the journalist took a picture of a compound which was suspected to be used for running an online scam in Bavet, Svay Rieng province. (see Annex Case #1 for more details)

Violations against the right to due process and liberty affected 14 journalists who were arbitrarily summoned/interrogated for questioning for in connecting to reporting on the Cambodia–Thailand border conflict, illegal fishing, and crime. Two journalists were reportedly forced to leave the Battambang province after receiving summons letter from provincial military police, fearing legal action.

During the reporting period two journalists were placed in pre-trial detention. The two journalists were arrested by Oddar Meanchey provincial police and are currently held in pre-trial detention in the Siem Reap province on charges of treason after posting a picture with a landmine in the background on social media.

(see Annex case # 7 for more details)

CamboJA also documented the detention of four journalists. Of these two journalists were held for questioning in connection to reporting on the Cambodia-Thailand border conflict. One of the journalists was questioned by the Banteay Meanchey provincial court and was charged with incitement. The journalist was then released and placed under court supervision. The other journalist was questioned by O’Chrov district police for three hours. (See Annex case # 4 and #5 for more details). In another incident, two journalists were arbitrarily detained by the Battambang provincial military police for questioning over reporting drug crackdown. The journalists were detained at the military police station for eight hours. *(See Annex Case # 3 for more details.)*

One instance classified as a violation against the right to justice occurred in the form of legal harassment. The case relates to the revocation of the license of a media outlet by the Ministry of Information after the outlet’s publisher conducted video interviews with villagers affected by the Cambodia-Thailand border conflict. *(see Annex case # 6 for more details)*

There was one case of a violation against psychological integrity in which the journalist was intimidated by local authority to prevent the journalist from reporting about local road damage in Kratie province. *(see Annex case #11 for more details)*

When it comes to the locations where violations occurred, the highest number of incidents took place in the Oddar Meanchey province, followed by Banteay Meanchey province and Battambang (see Table 3).

TABLE 3 : FREQUENCY OF REPORTED INCIDENTS AND VIOLATIONS BY LOCATION

Safety dimension	# of incidents	# of violations
Oddar Meanchey	3	12
Banteay Meanchey	2	2
Battambang	1	4
Phnom Penh	1	1
Kratie	1	1
Stung Treng	1	1
Preah Vihear	1	1
Svay Rieng	1	1
Total	11	23

As Table 4 demonstrates, 10 out of the 11 documented incidents (affecting 21 individual journalists and one media outlet) were perpetrated by state actors. These perpetrators were categorized across three levels: one at the national level (Ministry of Information), six at the provincial level (military police, provincial police and a governor), three at the local level (district police and environmental official). One case involved a private individual in retaliation for coverage of alleged criminal activity related to a scam.

The predominance of violations committed by state actors highlights persistent restrictions on freedom of expression and press freedom, constituting a clear breach of international human rights obligations and perpetuating a culture of impunity.

The data also shows that sensitive topics related, for example, to the Cambodia-Thai conflict, crime and the environment are dangerous for journalists to cover.

TABLE 4: TYPES OF PERPETRATORS AND TOPICS REPORTED

Topics	Local-level authority	Provincial level authority	National level authority	Private individual	Total
Border conflict	2	4	1		7
Crime		1		1	2
Environmental		1			1
Others	1	1			1
Total	3	6	1	1	

The data also shows that sensitive topics related, for example, to the Cambodia-Thai conflict, crime and the environment are dangerous for journalists to cover.

Between January and September 2025, CamboJA recorded a total of 47 instances of human rights violations against journalists and media organizations. Two of these affected women journalists. Legal safety violations remain the most common violation type. Of the 47 violations, 37 cases involved legal threats, legal actions, and legal harassment. Together, these account for more than 79% of the total violations documented to date. In addition, five media licenses were revoked in the first nine months of 2025. A total of five instances of physical assaults were documented in the same period. State actors committed 41 out of 47 violations, accounting for 87% of the total. Perpetrators ranged from local, provincial and national-level authorities.

IV. Conclusion

Cambodia's media environment during the third quarter of 2025 (July–September) continues to face significant and escalating pressure, particularly in the context of the Cambodia–Thailand border conflict.

Independent journalism remains under severe strain, as national security concerns are increasingly used to justify restrictions on reporting. Journalists are required to seek official permission before covering conflict issues, and many have been detained, summoned, or prevented from reporting by provincial authorities. This situation reflects a broader trend of shrinking civic and media space in Cambodia, where freedom of expression and access to information are being increasingly curtailed.

Violations, often carried out by state actors, not only contravene Cambodia's own constitutional protections but also breach international human rights obligations under treaties like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), perpetuating a culture of impunity.

The findings in this report highlight the growing risks journalists face in the course of carrying out their professional duties. The documented violations reflect a broader trend of repression characterized by arbitrary legal threats and action, physical threats, and administrative actions lacking due process.

Despite these challenges, CamboJA remains steadfast in its commitment to documenting violations, promoting fact-based journalism, and advocating for media freedom, the safety and rights of journalists and supporting an open and informed society in Cambodia.

Upholding press freedom is essential not only for the protection of journalists but also for ensuring transparency, accountability, and public participation in Cambodia's democratic development.

This report serves as a critical reminder of the persistent threats confronting journalists, and the urgent need for laws, policies and practices that ensure their safety and independence. However, real change will not occur without political will.

CamboJA continues to work for a future where journalists in Cambodia can carry out their work without fear of reprisal, in full exercise of their constitutional rights and call on all stakeholders to uphold press freedom and take meaningful action to address the growing challenges facing independent journalism in Cambodia.

V. Annex

1. September 19, 2025, Svay Rieng

A journalist of foreign nationality was briefly detained by a group of Chinese nationals inside the compound of the so-called “Bavet Business Center” in the border town of Bavet, while investigating alleged scam operations. Speaking to CamboJA on September 19, the journalist said the incident took place at around 7:00 p.m. on June 30. After checking into a hotel, he and his assistant walked around the downtown area, which is lined with casinos, as part of his news coverage.

At the Bavet Business Center, he noticed a heavily guarded entrance gate and took a photograph. Within minutes, a Cambodian man approached him and asked: “What are you filming here? This is a no-photography zone. What is your purpose?”

The journalist said his camera and smartphone were inspected, and he was ordered to delete the images. Although he complied, suspicions persisted, and he was escorted inside the compound for questioning.

He was taken to one of several residential buildings, where around 10 Chinese staff members confronted him. A Chinese man interrogated him for about 30 minutes before releasing him. “I was not asked to sign any documents, but I was surrounded by more than 10 Chinese men, which was extremely intimidating,” he said.

According to him, the interrogator warned: “Why did you come here? Delete all the photos you took here. You are not just a tourist. Do you understand what will happen if you don’t obey?” During the detention, the journalist’s smartphone and DSLR camera were temporarily confiscated. He said his camera’s SD card was seized, while the devices were inspected for image data.

Fearing for their safety, the journalist and his assistant immediately traveled back to Phnom Penh later that night.

On July 1, he reported the incident to his foreign Embassy in Phnom Penh. His assistant told CamboJA on October 1 that, following a meeting with the Embassy, the journalist was advised to leave Cambodia for security reasons. (*Type of act: Threat of physical harm*)

2. September 14, 2025, Preah Vihear

A freelance journalist was summoned for questioning by the Preah Vihear provincial governor while he was at Wat Pour 5000 refugee camp in Kulen Tbong village, Kulen Tbong commune, Kulen district, Preah Vihear province. No clear reason was provided for the summons.

The journalist said that around 3 p.m., he met another reporter, who was working as a fixer for an international media outlet, along with a staff member from the Ministry of Information at the camp. About half an hour later, three policemen arrived on motorbikes and told him that the provincial governor had ordered him to meet at the provincial hall.

At the hall, Governor Nob Vuthy told the journalist that before reporting in the border conflict area, he must notify the authorities in advance. The governor insisted that the journalist seek permission for every reporting trip.

The governor then questioned him further, asking: “Why did you come here? What topic are you working on? When did you arrive? Which institution are you working for?”

The journalist responded that he was a freelancer. The governor pressed for more details, asking about the types of stories he had written and how many media outlets he worked for. The questioning lasted more than an hour.

The governor also summoned the soldier’s wife who had spoken with the journalist for questioning before the journalist, reportedly asking her: “What did the journalist ask you?”

The journalist said the incident made him feel unsafe and that he believed there was no legitimate reason for the authorities to pressure him into disclosing his sources.

(Type of act: Summons/interrogation)

3. September 8, 2025, Battambang

Two journalists were detained for at least eight hours by Battambang provincial military police over reporting on a local drug crackdown in Sampov Lun district while two others summoned in the same case fled the province, fearing arrest.

The detained journalists told CamboJA that they were arrested without explanation around 9 a.m. at the same location and taken to the provincial military police headquarters for questioning.

According to them, authorities accused the journalists of sharing information about the crackdown with other media outlets. During the interrogation, they were reportedly asked: “Did you share this information with others for publication? Why didn’t you verify the details with the authorities before making it public?”

The incident relates to an August 30 operation in Sampov Lun district, where at least four journalists went to cover a drug-smuggling crackdown by the district military police. In the crackdown operation, district authorities announced that seven suspects had been arrested and handed over to the provincial military police. On September 2, the provincial military police issued a statement claiming that only five suspects had been arrested.

One of the detained journalists said that after noticing the conflicting reports, he called the provincial military police to verify the information. The following day, he and another journalist were arrested and accused of sharing photos and information with colleagues who later published a September 7 report. That report appeared to criticize authorities for allegedly accepting bribes from suspects in exchange for their release.

The two detained journalists were held at the provincial military police station for about eight hours before being released at 9 p.m.

Two other journalists who received summons from the provincial military police in connection to the same case. They fled the province temporarily, citing concerns for their safety. One journalist told CamboJA that after hearing of his colleagues' arrests, he and another journalist feared legal action and chose not to comply with the summons.

(Type of act: Detention)

4. August 28, 2025, Banteay Meanchey

A journalist from Meatophoum News was detained by O'Chrov district police while livestreaming about the Cambodia–Thailand border conflict. The incident occurred in Chouk Cheay village, O'Beichoan commune, O'Chrov district, Banteay Meanchey province, according to the local rights group LICADHO.

Speaking to CamboJA on the same day, the journalist said he was held for three hours before being released. He explained that police forced him to sign a contract agreeing to stop reporting on the border issue and to delete all related photos and videos. He said authorities also accused him of failing to use a press card issued by the Ministry of Information.

He added that his release came following the intervention of Khem Bunthong, Secretary of State at the Office of the Council of Ministers. The journalist told CamboJA that, for his own safety, he will temporarily suspend reporting on the border conflict.

(Type of act: Detention)

5. August 26, 2025, Banteay Meanchey

An online TV journalist Meas Sara was arrested after reporting on a border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand.

Sara was apprehended by provincial military police in O'Chrov district, Banteay Meanchey province, and brought to the provincial court for questioning the same day. He was detained for two days before being released on the night of August 27 after reportedly acknowledging his wrongdoing. His release followed mounting public backlash, with many condemning the arrest as a violation of press freedom.

According to local rights group Licadho, Sara was charged with incitement, though no official court documents have been made public. CamboJA was unable to reach the journalist for confirmation. While no authorities have formally confirmed the charge, reports indicate that Sara has been placed under court supervision. The arrest came shortly after the Ministry of Information revoked his media license on August 21.

On the day of his arrest, he livestreamed a video from Chouk Chhey village in Banteay Meanchey, where Cambodian villagers were protesting against Thai soldiers.

(Type of act: Detention)

6. August 21, 2025, Phnom Penh

The Ministry of Information revoked the media license of CCN Online TV without providing a clear explanation.

The decision came just one day after the outlet's publisher, Meas Sara, conducted a live video interview with a resident of Prek Chan village, O'Beichoan commune, O'Chrov district, Banteay Meanchey province. In the interview, the villager alleged that Thai soldiers had demolished Cambodian villagers' houses and dismantled a Cambodian military outpost.

The Ministry's Committee to Combat Fake News later claimed that Sara's reporting amounted to the publication of "incitement information."

Sara, however, maintained that during the livestream, the villager was simply expressing his personal opinion. He added that there had been no prior warning from the Ministry before the license was revoked.

Just two days earlier, on August 19, the Ministry of Information had summoned Sara to discuss journalistic professionalism and ethics in relation to his reporting on the border conflict. *(Type of act: Legal harassment, license revocation)*

7. July 31, 2025, Oddar Meanchey

Two journalists — Phorn Sopheap of Battambang Post and Pheap Pheara of TSP 68 TV Online — have been charged with treason after allegedly sharing sensitive information from the Cambodia–Thailand border on social media.

On September 10, the Siem Reap Provincial Court issued a statement announcing that the two journalists had been arrested on suspicion of gathering information and photographing a prohibited military zone near a battlefield, activities the court claimed could undermine national defense.

According to the statement, the alleged actions took place in Oddar Meanchey Province between July 25 and 31, 2025. The journalists have been formally charged with collecting information that could endanger national security.

The local rights group, LICADHO’s provincial coordinator in Banteay Meanchey said both journalists were separately arrested on July 31. They were later transferred to the Siem Reap Provincial Court and placed in pre-trial detention on August 2.

The court statement did not specify what information or photographs the journalists were accused of collecting. However, LICADHO’s coordinator said the case stemmed from an incident on July 29, 2025, when the two journalists went there for humanitarian donations to soldiers stationed along the border and also for reporting. The journalists also posted a photo taken at Ta Krabei Temple. The image, which was widely circulated by Thai media, allegedly showed “live landmines” in the background. The original post has since been deleted. (*Type of act: Pre-trial detention*)

8. July 31, 2025, Stung Treng

A journalist in Stung Treng province, who had previously been threatened with gunfire, was summoned for questioning by Nuon Pisey, Director of the Wildlife Sanctuary Area at Stung Treng Provincial Department of Environment.

The summons, dated July 31, 2025, was in response to his video reports, published on August 2 on illegal fishing and land clearing in a protected area in Sam Ang village, Sam Ang Commune, Thala Bariat district, Stung Treng province.

The journalist, who has contributed to outlets including Norkor Achharyak and Mekong News, told CamboJA on August 5, 2025, that he was questioned the same day. He declined to disclose what questions were asked. However, the reports were removed shortly after the questioning. In a statement issued on August 5, 2025, and seen by CamboJA, the provincial environmental department rejected the journalist’s reporting, claiming the reports were “inaccurate and not comprehensive.” The department said that after inspecting the site, authorities found only abandoned fishing equipment and “no evidence of criminal activity.”

The statement further criticized another report on community land clearing, saying it was based on “incomplete information” and accusing the journalist of failing to verify the facts with environmental officials before publishing.

This is not the first time the journalist has faced threats. On June 5, 2025, he was fired upon while returning from covering illegal logging activities in the Prey Lang Forest.

(Type of act: Interrogation/summons)

9. July 26, 2025, Oddar Meanchey

Journalists from BC News were reportedly questioned by police in Chong Kal district, Oddar Meanchey province, while filming and photographing civilians displaced by the Cambodia–Thailand border conflict. The civilians were sheltering at a local pagoda and other designated safe locations, according to a report published by BC News.

A journalist, Serey Mony, said police questioned him about his reporting activities and raised concerns over any footage that might include military movements or the mobilization of weapons. The journalists were taken in for questioning at 3:29 p.m. and released at 3:45 p.m. Mony clarified that they were not detained and that no equipment was confiscated during the interaction.

BC News is an online media outlet that primarily covers Buddhist religious events, activities of spiritual leaders, and economic developments.

(Type of act: Interrogation/summons)

10. July 25, 2025, Oddar Meanchey

Nine journalists — including one foreign correspondent — were reportedly taken to the Oddar Meanchey Provincial Police Station for questioning while en route to cover the Cambodia–Thailand border conflict.

Seven Cambodian journalists were released after about 10 minutes and were allowed to retrieve all of their equipment. However, the remaining two — a foreign freelance journalist and a local fixer — were held for approximately two hours. According to one journalist, police confiscated their cameras and smartphones, inspecting the devices for images of military mobilization, weapons, or soldiers. The journalists were also required to fill out personal information forms, declare their equipment, and provide details about their reporting activities. *(Type of act: Interrogation/summons)*

11. July 11, 2025, Kratie

A community radio journalist in Kratie province said he was intimidated by a local Forestry Administration official and told not to report on damaged roads in the area. The journalist said that on July 11, 2025, he and a colleague traveled to Roluos Meanchey and Srae Chis communes in Kratie province to report on road damage and the construction of a new bridge.

While stopping at a coffee shop in front of the Srae Chis Commune Hall in O'Krieng Saen Chey District, they interviewed local residents about the poor road conditions.

During the interview, a man identified as Run Tony, Chief of the Forestry Administration Division for Roluos Meanchey and Srae Chis communes, approached them. The journalist reported that Mr. Tony pointed his finger in his face and warned him not to report or disseminate any information about the damaged roads. The encounter led to a brief verbal argument before the official left the scene.

The journalist said the incident violated his right to freedom of expression and press freedom, which are guaranteed under the Cambodian Constitution.

Despite the incident, the journalist reported no further threats and has continued his reporting as usual. He noted that the damaged road has since been repaired. *(Type of act: Intimidation)*



Report cases of journalists' rights violations

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