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*Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association*

# Journalism Situation in Cambodia

## Quarterly Monitoring Report



October - December 2025

Issue No. 18

# 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. Executive summary

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 fourth quarter of 2025 (October-December) highlight ongoing challenges to media freedom and fundamental human rights in the country. In this period, CamboJA documented 14 instances of violations against journalists, all directly related to journalistic activities. The cases documented include instances of physical violence, threats, arbitrary legal acts and detention.

Four women journalists have been targeted. One woman journalist was sexually assaulted in a gender-based incident that involved both physical and psychological abuse of a sexual nature in a workplace. The other incidents involved threat of physical harm, verbal intimidation by a source and arrest in relation to coverage on the reporting on Cambodia-Thailand border conflict.

State actors, mostly local-level authorities, continue to be the primary actors allegedly responsible for the violations documented this quarter.

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 infringe 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. 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.

The documented violations have resulted in severe consequences for individual journalists, resulting in restrictions on movement, psychological impact/injury, self-censorship and enforced admission of wrongdoing/signing of apology letter.

The findings reveal a pattern similar to those observed during previous quarters of 2025 in which legal measures were used to intimidate or silence journalists who report on sensitive issues or the topics that involve authorities. 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 documented by CamboJA in the previous quarters of 2025, authorities are resorting to criminal charges, including incitement charges, 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 restrictions on journalistic work hinder public access to information and undermine meaningful participation in public discourse.

Despite the mounting challenges facing free and independent journalism in Cambodia, 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.

## II. Introduction

CamboJA's monitoring shows a continued deterioration of the environment for independent journalism in Cambodia. Restrictions have widened as the Ministry of Information has introduced new media regulations aimed at controlling journalistic work. Between October-December 2025) CamboJA observed a worrying development for press freedom in the Ministry of Information's new Prakas (a form of legally binding ministerial decision) on journalism qualifications. Framed as aiming to ensure minimum standards of quality, safety, and order within the media sector, the measure further compounds existing restrictions on press freedom. The ministry also introduced new requirements for obtaining press cards, requiring journalists to present a certification of good conduct issued by local authorities, publisher confirmation that the journalist in question has not been involved in legal cases or complaints, as well as additional documentation.<sup>1</sup>

The measures have raised concerns among stakeholders as they may increase the risks and constraints faced by journalists, further undermining an already fragile media environment. Human rights defenders and media organizations have called on the Ministry of Information to review the requirements, engage in meaningful consultation with relevant stakeholders, and ensure that regulatory frameworks safeguard, rather than restrict, independent journalism in Cambodia.<sup>2</sup>

These developments have further exacerbated self-censorship among Cambodian journalists and increased restrictions on press freedom, particularly following the violent Cambodia-Thailand border conflict.

As of October 2025, Cambodia had 8,732 registered journalists and media workers, of whom 13 percent were women. The number of female journalists reportedly increased by six percent compared to the previous year. The Ministry also recorded 1,552 registered media outlets nationwide. The ministry received 100 complaints related to media activities. While 23 cases of complaints were reportedly resolved to avoid legal action being taken against journalists, they highlight the continued pattern of the Ministry misusing legal mechanisms to target journalists.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://cambojanews.com/information-minister-says-new-journalist-rules-only-for-newcomers-concerns-persist/>

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=1169073295429083&id=100069792703760&mibextid=wwXlfr&rdid=2EzihWkNwLwjwLYA#](https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1169073295429083&id=100069792703760&mibextid=wwXlfr&rdid=2EzihWkNwLwjwLYA#)

<sup>3</sup>The data released by the Ministry of Information's spokesperson, Tep Asnarith during the National Commemoration of International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists on December 4, 2025, in Phnom Penh. The event organized by OHCHR and UNESCO.

The developments outlined above reflect increasing state control over Cambodia’s media landscape through legal, regulatory, and administrative measures. While the Ministry of Information frames these actions as efforts to improve journalistic quality, combat misinformation and fake news, and maintain social order, they collectively indicate a narrowing operational space for independent journalism in Cambodia. This trend has significant implications for democratic accountability, public access to information, and the safety and autonomy of media professionals.

Without action to end the misuse of laws, repeal restrictive regulations, and protect journalists from retaliation, the space for independent media in Cambodia will continue to shrink- largely out of public view - but with serious consequences for accountability, and democratic governance.



*Photo: Pring Samrang*

## III. 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),<sup>4</sup> Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 16.10.1<sup>5</sup> and key human rights provisions.<sup>6</sup>

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.

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<sup>4</sup> The International Crime Classifications is a framework to systematically classify and categories 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).

<sup>5</sup> Sustainable 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](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/SDG_Indicator_16_10_1_Guidance_Note.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> These 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)

## 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 October to December 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.

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.

## IV. Key Findings

From October to December 2025, CamboJA documented 14 instances of human rights violations targeting journalists, including four women journalists. The number of violations against women journalists documented this quarter was higher compared to previous quarters.

Among the violations against women journalists, a prominent case concerned gender-based-violations where the journalist faced multiple forms of abuse, including physical and verbal sexual harassment in the workplace and the termination of her work contract, in violation of labor law.

The 14 recorded violations occurred in 10 separate incidents, meaning that multiple journalists were exposed to human rights violations in connection with the same incident or news reporting event.

The cases documented this quarter represent a 39% decline compared to the previous quarter (July-September), during which 23 violations were documented. This decline does however not signal an improvement in press freedom. Instead, documented cases - as a whole - indicate an increasingly restrictive media environment, characterized by regulatory controls, legal intimidation, and self-censorship.

A new Prakas (a form of legally binding ministerial decision) on journalism qualifications, introduced by the government, has significantly tightened requirements for press cards, further restricting independent journalism. Journalists must now provide certificates of good conduct from local authorities, confirmation from publishers that the journalist in question has been not been involved in legal cases or complaints, and additional documentation. These requirements grant authorities broad discretionary power to control who can legally practice journalism.

Eight cases documented directly impacted journalists' legal safety, accounting for 57% of the total of violations (see Table 1). These include seven instances of detention with journalists being arrested for questioning by local authorities while reporting on Cambodia-Thailand conflict. In addition, one instance of legal harassment was documented. With regard to the latter it involved a journalist being summoned and placed under judicial supervision by provincial police.

Four cases of violations against physical security were documented. These include: one instance of crossfire injury connected to reporting on the Cambodia-Thailand conflict, one sexual assault of a woman journalist, one case of assault, and one instance of threat of physical harm.

The journalist who suffered the assault filed a police complaint, and in the sexual assault case, the affected journalist reported the incident to a human rights defender organization, the media organization that employed her, as well as CamboJA.

In relation to the sexual assault case, the actor/individual allegedly responsible was not held to account and instead the victim had her work contract terminated by her employer without compensation, in violation of labour law.

Finding in this quarter show that those journalists working for online media outlets are most often exposed to violations. These figures coincides with a broader trend of increasing online surveillance and escalating risks associated with utilizing digital platforms for independent reporting.

As in the previous quarter, reporting on the Cambodia–Thailand border conflict was a key driver of violations. 50% of violations (seven in total) documented by CamboJA are directly linked to authorities’ efforts to control reporting on the conflict, frequently justified on national security grounds. The intense focus on the border conflict has also crowded out reporting on other sensitive issues, as journalists fear retaliation while public attention remains fixed on the conflict.

In the fourth quarter of 2025, CamboJA recorded a case of repeated violations against the same journalist, with incidents documented in consecutive quarters. This case demonstrates how sustained legal pressures and harassment operate as a coercive measure - even in the absence of a conviction – to reinforce fear and self-censorship among journalists.

## **The findings reflect:**

- 1.** The continued misuse of legal and judicial mechanisms to silence journalists, punish critical reporting, and deter journalists from covering public interest issues.
- 2.** An increasingly restrictive media environment, reinforced by regulatory controls, legal intimidation, and self-censorship.
- 3.** How national security narratives related to the Thailand-Cambodia conflict are used to legitimize censorship, restrict access, and suppress independent scrutiny.
- 4.** The intersection of workplace abuse and the absence of effective safeguards for women journalists

As shown in Table 1, the violations documented in the period cover four key safety dimensions: legal, physical and psychological safety and other violations against the right to freedom of expression.

**TABLE 1: BREAKDOWN OF VIOLATIONS BY SAFETY DIMENSIONS**

Safety Dimension	Number of Violations	Number of incidents
Legal safety	8	4
Physical safety	4	4
Psychological safety	1	1
Other violations against the right to freedom of expression	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 2 breaks down the types and frequency of human rights violations and acts recorded during the period. As shown, five key types of human rights violations occurred, including violations of the rights to physical security; psychological integrity; justice; due process and liberty as well as other violations against the right to freedom of expression. As shown in Table 2, the most common violation type affecting journalists relates to rights to due process and liberty (7 violations in total)

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

Type of human rights violation	Acts included	Type of act	Number of violations
Right to physical security	Acts connected to journalistic activity causing (attack) bodily harm or intending to (threat) cause bodily harm.	Assault	1
		Sexual assual	1
		Cross-fire injury	1
		Threat of physical harm	1
Right to psychological integrity	Acts connected to journalistic activity with intended to induce fear or emotional distress	Intimidation	1
Right to justice	Arbitrary legal threats and action 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.	Detentions	7
Other violations against right to freedom of expression	Acts constituting censorship or control of journalistic expression not covered elsewhere	Denial of access	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>14</b>

In relation to violations against physical security, one journalist in Oddar Meanchey was seriously injured in cross-fire by a bullet fragment while reporting on clashes along the Cambodia–Thailand border. The case highlights the absence of adequate safety measures or protections for journalists covering conflict-related events in Cambodia.<sup>7</sup> In the Kandal province, a publisher was physically assaulted by a deputy provincial governor while live-streaming a public protest, illustrating how senior officials use force to silence critical reporting.<sup>8</sup>

One case of sexual assault in the workplace against a woman journalist was recorded, in which she experienced both physical and verbal assault.<sup>9</sup> In another incident, a woman journalist was threatened with physical harm at her home at night after publishing reports on suspected illegal mining. The attack damaged property and belongings of the journalist.<sup>10</sup>

Arbitrary detention continues to constitute a key violation against the liberty of journalists. In total seven cases of detention were recorded. Of those, six journalists were detained, questioned, and had their equipment temporarily seized while covering a bomb-damaged bridge and nearby refugee camp in Oddar Meanchey. Police accused the journalists of lacking proper authorization to cover the event and raised suspicions of espionage,<sup>11</sup> In the Kampot province, a publisher was arrested and detained after reporting on the alleged mismanagement of disorder of the local market. He was released only after recording a public apology video at the police station.<sup>12</sup> In Banteay Meanchey, a publisher was furthermore exposed to legal harassment as he was placed under judicial supervision in a case linked to reporting on alleged police misconduct which the form of legal harassment.<sup>13</sup>

In another case, a female journalist covering labor rights abuses received abusive messages and legal threats after refusing to disclose her sources.<sup>14</sup>

Regarding other violations against right to freedom of expression restrictions on access (denial of access) to public spaces and information were evident in Phnom Penh when one radio journalists were barred by private security guards from documenting rising Mekong River water levels and warned him to leave the location before the action be taken.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>For more detail of the case please see annex case #2.

<sup>8</sup>For more detail of the case please see annex case #5.

<sup>9</sup>The full detail case of this violation was not provided in this report to avoid do no harm on victim.

<sup>10</sup>For more detail of the case please see annex case #4.

<sup>11</sup>For more detail of the case please see annex case #1.

<sup>12</sup>For more detail of the case please see annex case #3.

<sup>13</sup>For more detail of the case please see annex case #6.

<sup>14</sup>The full detail case of this violation was not provided in this report due to journalist's concern of safety.

<sup>15</sup>For more detail of the case please see annex case #7.

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

**TABLE 3: FREQUENCY OF REPORTED INCIDENTS AND VIOLATIONS BY LOCATION**

Safety dimension	# of violations	# of incidents
Oddar Meanchey	7	3
Phnom Penh	2	2
Banteay Meanchey	1	1
Kandal	1	1
Mondulkiri	1	1
Kampot	1	1
Kampong Speu	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>

Six out of the ten documented incidents (affected 14 journalists) were allegedly perpetrated by state actors. These action takers were categorized across three levels: two at provincial level (provincial deputy governor and provincial police), three at the local level (district police). In one incident the journalist was injured in a cross-fire incident related to the conflict between Cambodia and Thailand.

Four cases involved a private individual (private security and private individual) in retaliation for coverage of alleged illegal mining related to the high-rise Mekong River. One incident was gender-based violence as a female journalist faced sexual harassment by her supervisor.

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 documented violations were linked to coverage on the Cambodia-Thai conflict, social accountability, mining, labour rights and protest.

## V. Conclusion

CamboJA's findings from the fourth quarter of 2025 highlight a persistent structural decline in press freedom in Cambodia. Independent journalism is operating in an increasingly restrictive environment shaped by expanding regulatory controls, legal intimidation, and persistent violations against journalists. Measures introduced by the Ministry of Information—particularly the new Prakas on journalism qualifications and stricter press card requirements—have created additional barriers to journalistic work and increased the risk of arbitrary detention, retaliation, and self-censorship. Despite being framed as efforts to improve professionalism and social order, these regulations further narrow the space for independent media.

The 14 documented violations against journalists during this quarter illustrate the tangible human rights consequences of this environment. Journalists faced physical attacks and threats, gender-based violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, and legal intimidation, with state actors—mainly local authorities—frequently implicated. These violations contravene Cambodia's Constitution and its international obligations under the ICCPR, while the continued use of criminal charges instead of civil remedies reflects a pattern of legal intimidation aimed at silencing critical reporting.

Taken together, these developments demonstrate increasing state control over the media and a growing climate of fear that undermines public access to information and democratic accountability. Without urgent reforms to amend or repeal these restrictive regulations, end the misuse of laws, and ensure protection and accountability for violations against journalists, the space for independent media in Cambodia will continue to shrink, with serious consequences for freedom of expression and democratic governance.

Protecting journalists is not only a matter of the safety of individual journalists; it is essential to safeguarding democratic governance, transparency, and the public's right to information.

CamboJA remains committed to documenting these challenges and advocating for a media environment in Cambodia that fully respects constitutional guarantees and international human rights standards, enabling journalists to work freely, safely, and without fear.

## VI. Annex

### 1. December 16, 2025, Oddar Meanchey province

Six journalists from two media outlets, including one female journalist were arrested by Cheung Tean commune police while covering a damaged bridge in Chongkal district, Oddar Meanchey province which had reportedly been bombed by the Thai military. One of the journalists told CamboJA that he and his colleagues were taken to the commune police station for questioning for approximately two hours on 16 December 2025. The incident occurred when their team traveled to Cheung Tien commune to report on a site reportedly struck by a bomb involving Thai military forces.

According to the journalist, police approached the team while they were taking photographs of the bomb site and a nearby refugee camp and then escorted them to the commune police post. He said the police accused the journalists of not carrying an official mission letter and expressed suspicion that they were engaged in espionage.

The journalist added that police temporarily seized the journalists' mobile phones and camera for inspection and required them to write a statement confirming their status as journalists. The six were released after the questioning.

The woman journalist said that authorities had not informed her team that the area was restricted, and they therefore went to the site to report on the incident. She explained that while they were preparing to take photos and video footage at the location, police officers arrived and shouted at them, asking why they were taking photographs and which media outlet they represented. According to the journalist, police searched their vehicle, checked for GPS devices, and confiscated their phones. Officers also requested a mission letter and subsequently took the journalists to the police post, where they were questioned for several hours. Police reportedly told them that the area was restricted due to concerns about espionage.

The woman journalist said that following the submission of written statements detailing their identities and professional profiles, they were released. (*Type of act: detention*)

### 2. December 8, 2025, Oddar Meanchey province

A Cambodian journalist in the Oddar Meanchey province was injured in cross-fire on December 8 while reporting on the Cambodia-Thai border clash.

Pol Chham, a reporter for Whitehorse News, sustained a serious mouth injury after being hit by a bullet fragment. According to his daughter, he had been filming explosions allegedly fired from the Thai side into Cambodian territory in the Kouk Mon commune, Banteay Ampil district.

She told CamboJA that around 6 a.m. on December 8, 2025, an explosion was heard near their village. Her father immediately left home to cover the incident. Shortly afterward, she tried calling him but received no response. She later learned that he had been seriously wounded by a bullet fragment that struck his mouth. She believes the incident occurred between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. Chham was sent for emergency treatment at the provincial health center. *(Type of act: crossfire injury)*

### **3. November 30, 2025, Kampot province**

On 30 November, a publisher from Questioncam News was arbitrarily detained by Kampot provincial police after reporting on alleged irregularities in the management of a local market.

Speaking to CamboJA on 1 December, the journalist said police officers arrived at his [friend's house], where he was staying, and took him to the provincial police station for questioning. He declined to share details about the questions asked during the interrogation.

When asked which specific report might have prompted the arrest, the journalist said he was unsure, explaining that he had published multiple reports exposing alleged inactivity and irregularities in the Kampot province. However, he believes the arrest may be linked to a livestream he conducted on 29 November at Samiki Market, where he reported on irregularities in the local market's management.

Prior to the arrest, a post on the Questioncam News Facebook page stated that "a group of police arbitrarily arrested me and forced me to go to Kampot city after I reported irregularities at the Samiki Market." The post was later removed.

Later that evening, at 7:40 p.m., the journalist posted an apology video addressed to Kampot provincial authorities, admitting that his earlier reporting contained incomplete information and promising to be more cautious in the future.

He told CamboJA that he believed he had done nothing wrong in his reporting. However, to protect his media outlet, he agreed to issue the apology in exchange for his release. According to him, the apology video was recorded at the police station. He was released at 8:16 p.m. the same night. *(Type of act: detention)*

### **4. November 16, 2025, Mondulkiri province**

A woman journalist in Mondulkiri province says she has faced intimidation from unidentified individuals after repeatedly reporting on suspected illegal mining activities in Pu Tong village, Chong Phlah commune, Keo Seima district.

In November, she published two articles — on the 12th and 15th — documenting what she described as illegal mining operations in the area.

She told CamboJA on November 18 that at around 2 a.m. on November 16, 2025, at least two unknown individuals threw stones at her house, shattering a glass cabinet and damaging other belongings.

The attack occurred in the same village where she had recently documented mining activities. The journalist said she has no personal disputes with anyone. However, just one day before the incident, on November 15, she had filmed what she described as ongoing excavation by a group operating in Chong Phlah commune. She noted that the site had previously been run by a Chinese company.

She suspects the perpetrators may be linked to the mining activities, saying she briefly saw one person's face during the attack, though not clearly enough to identify them.

On the morning of November 16, she filed a complaint with Chong Phlah commune police and requested access to CCTV footage from a neighbor's security camera. Police later told her the camera had not been functioning at the time. She is still waiting for further action from authorities regarding her case.

On November 19, 2025, Chong Phlah commune police chief Chan Sophary told CamboJA that he had received the journalist's complaint and said police are working on the case. *(Type of act: physical harm)*

### **5. October 26, 2025, Kandal province**

A publisher from AK News was physically assaulted and banned from reporting by the Kandal Deputy Provincial Governor while covering a public protest through a live stream.

According to a video shared on Facebook, the incident occurred on October 26, 2025, in Kandal Steung district, Kandal province, during a protest where residents demanded that Oknha Leng Navatra fulfill his promise to provide houses to buyers. The video shows the deputy governor pushing a journalist aside as he attempted to interview the governor.

Speaking to CamboJA, the journalist said he had gone to the protest site after receiving information from villagers who were blocking National Road 6A to call for the promised housing delivery. When he arrived, provincial authorities were already at the scene to mediate the situation. He attempted to interview the deputy governor about possible solutions, but the official refused to respond and instead pushed him on the shoulder.

He expressed disappointment over the incident, saying that despite his efforts to report in public interest, he was treated disrespectfully by the authorities. *(Type of act: assault)*

### **6. October 22, 2025, Banteay Meanchey province**

On October 22, 2025, the Banteay Meanchey Provincial Court questioned Ung Thab Reang, publisher of Khmer Cheay Den News, for the second time and decided to place him under judicial supervision in connection with a lawsuit filed by the Poipet police in June.

On June 9, 2025, Thab Reang was detained overnight for questioning by provincial police and court officials. He was later released after the court found no sufficient grounds for prosecution.

Local human rights organization LICADHO reported that the court ordered Thab Reang to comply with strict conditions under Article 223 of the Criminal Code.

Speaking to CamboJA on October 23, Thab Reang said he was ordered to appear before the court every two weeks until the trial begins. He described the court's action as "revenge" by local authorities after he had filed a complaint with the Ministry of Interior accusing them of arbitrary detention during his questioning in June. He added that he has also sought intervention from the Ministry of Information.

The complaint against Thab Reang is linked to an article he published on May 22, 2025, about Poipet police chief Prum Piseth. The article reported on a man who was seriously assaulted and later filed a complaint with the Ministry of Interior, accusing the police chief of misrepresenting details of the case. According to Thab Reang, this report served as the basis for the lawsuit filed against him.

This is not the first time the Khmer Cheay Den News publisher has faced legal action. On February 12, 2023, he was arrested and jailed on incitement charges following his reporting on alleged corruption within the Poipet health and tax departments. He was released on May 10, 2023.

In January 2024, Thab Reang was convicted to six months in prison with suspended sentence along with a two million riel fine (approximately USD 500). In January 2025, the Supreme Court upheld his conviction but dropped the fine. *(Type of act: legal harassment)*

### **7. October 1, 2025, Phnom Penh**

On October 1, 2025, a local radio journalist was barred from reporting on the rising water levels of the Mekong River in Phnom Penh.

The journalist told CamboJA that at around 11 a.m. he was filming and photographing the rising river water, which had flooded sidewalks and nearby business areas in the Norea City satellite development. He said that while they were documenting the scene, security guards approached and questioned him about the purpose of their filming.

After being aware of the journalist, the guards ordered him to stop recording. Despite this, he continued working, prompting the guards to warn that "there will be a problem" if he did not stop. The guards further claimed that the journalist needed to request permission before filming or taking photos. The journalist disputed the guards' demands, noting that he was documenting from a public area. *(Type of act: denial of access)*

# Report cases of journalists' rights violations

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