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LICADHO

CAMBODIAN LEAGUE FOR THE
PROMOTION AND DEFENSE OF
HUMAN RIGHTS



HUMAN RIGHTS 2015: THE YEAR IN REVIEW



A report issued in
February 2016





HUMAN RIGHTS 2015: The Year in Review

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LICADHO

CAMBODIAN LEAGUE FOR THE PROMOTION
AND DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

CAMBODIAN LEAGUE FOR THE PROMOTION AND DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS (LICADHO)

LICADHO is a national Cambodian human rights organization. Since its establishment in 1992, LICADHO has been at the forefront of efforts to protect civil, political, economic and social rights in Cambodia and to promote respect for them by the Cambodian government and institutions. Building on its past achievements, LICADHO continues to be an advocate for the Cambodian people and a monitor of the government through wide ranging human rights programs from its main office in Phnom Penh and 13 provincial offices.

MONITORING & PROTECTION



Monitoring of State Violations & Women's and Children's Rights:

Monitors investigate human rights violations perpetrated by the State and violations made against women and children. Victims are provided assistance through interventions with local authorities and court officials.

Medical Assistance & Social Work:

A medical team provides assistance to prisoners and prison officials in 14 prisons, victims of human rights violations and families in resettlement sites. Social workers conduct needs assessments of victims and their families and provide short-term material and food.

Prison Monitoring:

Researchers monitor 18 prisons to assess prison conditions and ensure that pre-trial detainees have access to legal representation.

Paralegal & Legal Representation:

Victims are provided legal advice by a paralegal team and, in key cases, legal representation by human rights lawyers.

PROMOTION & ADVOCACY

Supporting Unions & Grassroots Groups and Networks:

Assistance to unions, grassroots groups and affected communities to provide protection and legal services, and to enhance their capacity to campaign and advocate for human rights.

Training & Information:

Advocates raise awareness to specific target groups, support protection networks at the grassroots level and advocate for social and legal changes with women, youths and children.

Public Advocacy & Outreach:

Human rights cases are compiled into a central electronic database, so that accurate information can be easily accessed and analyzed, and produced into periodic public reports (written, audio and visual) or used for other advocacy.

For more information contact:

Dr. Pung Chhiv Kek, President
LICADHO
#16, Street 99
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Tel: (855) 23 72 71 02/216 602
Fax: (855) 23 727 102/217 626

E-mail: contact@licadho-cambodia.org

Web: www.licadho-cambodia.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/licadho Twitter: www.twitter.com/licadho

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A MESSAGE FROM LICADHO'S PRESIDENT



LICADHO's Phnom Penh office takes a stand against LANGO, June 2015.

Human rights in Cambodia took a back seat to political clashes in 2015 as the vice on Cambodia's citizen groups continued to tighten.

Cambodia joined a long line of countries clamping down on civil society as the widely-condemned Law on Associations and NGOs was passed in July. Local and international civil society, including grassroots groups, unions, NGOs, and associations united to protest the unconstitutional law, but this did not stop the ruling party from passing it. With other repressive laws in the pipeline, it is clear that the government is willing to take extreme legislative steps to undermine the power of citizens to organise and express themselves.

The judiciary as well as the legislature remains firmly in the hands of the ruling party. In this environment, it is shocking but sadly unsurprising that 24 people ended the year in prison simply because of their public expression of dissent against those holding political or economic power. The 24 include four environmental activists, currently incarcerated in Koh Kong, who are central to the struggle to protect Cambodia's natural resources.

Throughout the year, LICADHO staff in Phnom Penh and out thirteen provincial offices¹ gathered extensive data about the state of human rights in Cambodia as they monitored protests, investigated abuses, provided

¹ Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Kampong Cham, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Speu, Kampong Thom, Kampot, Koh Kong, Pursat, Ratanakiri, Siem Reap, Sihanoukville and Svay Rieng

legal services to human rights defenders and offered much-needed medical and social aid. The data collected informed all stakeholders in Cambodia: donor countries, the UN, development partners, national and international media, the government itself and – most importantly – the Cambodian public. Our ever-expanding social media platforms show that more and more Cambodians, particularly youth, are engaging with social justice and human rights issues, which is encouraging for the future.

Cambodia's shrinking space for democracy is not only a national issue but also part of a global trend – over 60 countries have either drafted or passed laws suppressing civil society organisations in the past three years. In this environment, a core part of our work is not only to support the people's groups at the forefront of Cambodia's struggle for democracy, but to connect them with our allies around the world through international lobbying and joint advocacy – thus amplifying the voices of those calling for change at the grassroots.

This report provides an overview of the human rights situation in Cambodia and summarizes LICADHO's achievements over the past year. As we look to 2016, LICADHO wishes to thank its staff, supporters, and funding partners, without whom our work would not be possible. We also thank Cambodia's activists and human rights defenders who throughout 2015 showed tremendous vision, courage, and commitment in their calls for change.

HUMAN RIGHTS 2015: THE YEAR IN REVIEW



Garment factory workers celebrate International Labour Day in Phnom Penh, May 2015.

INTRODUCTION

In 2015 Cambodia's democratic space was dealt a series of critical blows as the government tightened its control through legislation and politicized courts.

The ruling party passed two laws intended to muzzle Cambodia's civil society and quash dissenting voices: the Law on Associations and NGOs (LANGO) and the amended Law on Election of Members of the National Assembly (LEMNA). These laws, together with two similarly repressive draft laws which remain on the near horizon, show that the government remains determined to constrict fundamental freedoms and curtail those who want to speak out.

It was a shaky year for the so-called 'culture of dialogue' between Cambodia's two main political parties. Political jostling between the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) manifested in arrests, detentions and in some cases, physical injuries. The conviction of 11 CNRP supporters, activists and officials in July sparked a wave of politically-motivated arrests – those aligned, or perceived to be aligned, with the opposition party were thrown into prison alongside human rights defenders arrested for their environmental and land activism. By the end of the year, opposition leader Sam Rainsy found himself once again forced into self-exile, while 15 opposition figures, including an opposition senator, were imprisoned.

Meanwhile, land and labour groups continued their struggles for land rights and a fair minimum wage. The solidarity between different sectors grew in response to repressive laws; unions and associations protested alongside citizens' groups and NGOs to try to halt the enactment of laws which seek to silence the voices of all.

REPRESSIVE LAWS

The ruling party passed the widely-criticized LANGO in July, in disregard of the Cambodian Constitution, international law, and extensive condemnation by civil society, the opposition party, citizens and the [international community](#).

After years of drafting and re-drafting, often in secret, ruling CPP MPs unanimously passed the law at the National Assembly during a vote on June 13, which was boycotted by all opposition MPs. From then, the law's legislative process was swift: within two months, it had been passed by the Senate, and, despite [serious breaches](#), declared constitutional following a cursory review by the Constitutional Council. The law was rubber-stamped by the King on the same day.

LANGO establishes mandatory registration for all citizen groups, criminalizing those the government refuses to register, leaving doors wide-open for arbitrary assault by the state against freedoms of association, assembly, and expression for all citizens acting collaboratively in Cambodia – especially at the grassroots level. Despite having come fully into effect in early September,

LANGO's requirements remain unclear: for example, local officials have insisted that LANGO applies even to families [advocating in land disputes](#), contradicting vague assurances from the Ministry of Interior that the law would not apply to all citizens' groups. This should come as no surprise; provisions exempting local groups present in earlier drafts of LANGO were removed prior to its adoption.

The law also installs draconian requirements forcing all domestic and international NGOs and international associations to remain "politically neutral", an undefined vague term which, if breached, allows arbitrary de-registration by the Ministry of the Interior – silencing the lawful advocacy and legitimate dissent essential to democracy. Any doubts regarding the malign intent of the ruling party were immediately dispelled on the day LANGO was passed when a CPP MP raised the case of local election monitoring group COMFREL¹ as an example of a breach of "political neutrality" for its public research into electoral fraud and irregularities during the 2013 national election.



Activists campaign against restrictive laws in Phnom Penh, May 2015.

Government arguments that LANGO is necessary to regulate NGO funding, which according to Prime Minister Hun Sen could come from [terrorist groups](#), are disingenuous and ignore the Cambodian Civil Code and the Law on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism which already provide an extensive framework for the regulation of NGOs, associations and other citizens' groups.

On the contrary, the actual political motivations underlying the law are clear; both before and after LANGO was passed, NGOs were tangibly restricted in 2015 in a way not seen for years. LICADHO was forced to cancel its International Women's Day celebrations in prisons for the first time in [15 years](#) and its International Human Rights Day celebrations in prisons for the first time in [20 years](#) owing to unnecessary and prohibitive conditions set by the General Department of Prisons.

¹The Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia

LANGO forms just one part of a wider legislative assault on civil society and fundamental freedoms. On March 19, Cambodia's parliamentarians amended LEMNA. The amended law, passed as part of political negotiations between the two leading parties, establishes fines and bans on NGOs that criticize political parties during the 21-day election campaigning period. Essentially, it bars civil society groups from participating in the process of elections, increasing the grave democratic deficit in Cambodia.

On November 30, the National Assembly approved the Telecommunications Law, a piece of legislation characterized – like LANGO – by opaque drafting and a total lack of meaningful consultation.

The law has been passed by both the National Assembly and the Senate, and awaits final promulgation by the King – but its final provisions remain unclear. A leaked draft suggests that the law would give the government power to authorize mass surveillance and take action against internet service providers carrying content or facilitating online forums that the government deems a threat – essentially nationalizing Cambodia's telecommunications industry.

A draft Cybercrime Law threatens to further tighten the legislative noose around online space by imposing a swathe of new criminal offences for online activity. Similarly to the Telecommunications Law, it contains provisions so broad and vaguely defined that they could be stretched to encompass nearly any form of critical content online.

Together, the Telecommunications Law and the draft Cybercrime law have the potential to [quash Cambodia's burgeoning online presence](#) – which has opened a rare window for free media as well as freedom of expression and information sharing on social media – and put the internet firmly into the hands of the government.

If the repressive intent of the laws was not clear enough, the government issued demands on the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications in May to "[take legal action](#)" against Cambodian citizens using the internet to "insult" or "defame" civil servants and high-ranking government officials. Such charges have often been used in the past to silence critics and since May, there have been several highly publicized arrests and detentions of social media users.

A draft Law on Unions of Enterprises (Trade Union Law) remains with the Ministry of Interior waiting for approval. The law [threatens freedom of association](#) through vague and discretionary restrictions on union autonomy and activities and could potentially be used to target union leaders. Similarly to LANGO, excessively burdensome registration requirements could act as a de facto block for smaller unions with limited resources. The law comes at a particularly critical time for trade unions in the country

“More than twenty police entered the courtroom as soon as the judges went to deliberate the verdict. This makes it clear that this trial was simply for show, with a predetermined ending, apparently set up to intimidate the CNRP following the prior weekend’s events in Svay Rieng. It is no coincidence that two of the three men sentenced to a ludicrous 20 years’ imprisonment were present in Svay Rieng during the stand-off”

Naly Pilorge, Director of LICADHO.

who remain in the midst of an ongoing union campaign for a fair minimum wage and decent working conditions.

JUDICIAL ATTACKS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION - POLITICAL PRISONERS AND IMPRISONED HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Although Cambodia’s repressive new laws threaten fundamental freedoms through legislation, authorities demonstrated they needed no such new laws to silence dissidents. Instead, the government continued to abuse the courts and the judicial system as a whole by misusing existing laws. 2015 began with 19 people, including land activists, opposition party activists and supporters, and Buddhist monks, wrongfully imprisoned following their politically-motivated arrests in late 2014. By the end of April, all 19 had been released. However, this period of uneasy calm in the courts was not to last: in the second half of 2015, the government once again stepped up its campaign to silence and suppress any form of dissent through the judiciary.

By the time 2015 drew to a close, 24 political prisoners languished behind bars.² Cambodian authorities used myriad laws to arrest and detain people from all strata of society on spurious grounds – from grassroots supporters convicted for insurrection for simply attending a political rally to a CPP commune councillor arrested on charges of violating a forestry management plan for supporting environmental protests. What these cases have in common is that the detentions – and in some cases, convictions – were imposed purely for political motives and to suppress dissent.

In July, 11 CNRP members and supporters – five of whom had been among the 19 imprisoned at the start of the year – were convicted on charges of insurrection and sentenced to between seven and 20 years’ imprisonment in relation to a protest turned violent at Freedom Park one year prior. All 11, including the five who had been released on bail in April, were sent to CC1 prison.

The proceedings were a **farce**: only one of the nine defence lawyers was present during the final day of the trial; defendants’ requests to delay closing arguments were arbitrarily denied; police and military police entered the courtroom and the road outside the courtroom was blocked as soon as the judges summarily closed the trial and began their deliberations; they deliberated for just 15 minutes before returning with written verdicts and sentences. The trial, which had taken place intermittently since December 2014, was noticeably accelerated a day after a series of opposition-led visits to Cambodia-Vietnam border areas culminated in a thousands-strong gathering at a border area in Svay Rieng province, in which two defendants had participated.

By the second half of the year, anyone who disagreed with the government quickly found that authorities were clamping down on dissent through any medium. As well as the 11 convicted in July, three more CNRP activists were arrested on August 4 and 5 for participation in the same 2014 protest – just days after Prime Minister Hun Sen had **called on the armed forces** to take action over any group attempting a “colour revolution” in a speech to 5,000 senior members of the police and armed forces.

² See Appendix: List of Political Prisoners

Monks Dav Tep and Chea Vanda were arrested on August 1 and charged with sending death threats, concealing drugs and using a forged document. Both monks had participated in CNRP-led demonstrations in the past. They are yet to stand trial.

Nor were Senators immune to the wave of arrests and legal intimidation. Opposition senator Hong Sok Hour was charged with forgery of public documents, use of forged public documents, and incitement to commit a crime after re-posting an altered version of a reproduction of the 1979 treaty between Cambodia and Vietnam on Facebook. He was **arrested** on August 15 on the orders of the Prime Minister and has been detained in CC1 prison since then. On October 7, his trial was **suspended indefinitely**.

Prosecution because of content posted on Facebook proved a recurrent theme through the rest of the year. Cambodia Student Network president Kong Raya was **arrested** on August 20 and charged with incitement over a Facebook post calling for a “colour revolution”, a generic term disliked by the government. Three months later, a CNRP commune councillor was **arrested** alongside a CNRP supporter for posting a birth certificate containing the wrong location of birth information on Facebook.

Such attacks on freedom of expression exercised over the internet look set to continue. As well as the Telecommunications Law, awaiting final promulgation since December, and the Cybercrime Law poised for passage by Cambodia’s parliamentarians, the Ministry of Interior enacted a **sub-decree** in August which establishes an anti-cybercrime team within the ministry. Under the oversight of the Ministry of Interior, this institution is mandated to monitor social media and, chillingly, “correct false information online”.

Those wrongfully imprisoned were not limited to political actors. Three staffers from NGO Mother Nature were **arrested** on August 14 after an ongoing campaign to end alleged illegal sand dredging in Koh Kong. They remain in jail; as of the end of 2015, they are yet to stand trial. The three arrests form part of a wider attack on Mother Nature and on civil society in general – earlier in the year, Alejandro Gonzalez-Davidson, a Spanish citizen and a founder and director of Mother Nature, was **deported** from the country effectively on the order of the Prime Minister after the government arbitrarily refused to renew his visa.

Incarcerated alongside the three is Areng Valley community representative and CPP commune councilor **Vein Vorn**, imprisoned because of his role in another Koh Kong-based environmental campaign spearheaded by Mother Nature – this time to prevent the controversial development of a hydroelectric dam in Areng Valley by the Chinese group Sinohydro and its local partner, CPP senator Lao Meng King, head of the infamous Pheapimex Group.

The number of political prisoners detained over 2015 is indicative of the increasingly restricted political environment, where free expression is stifled and freedom of peaceful assembly repressed.



Calling for the release of Mother Nature activists in Phnom Penh, December 2015.

“Over the last few years, we have seen countless peaceful protests violently dispersed in the capital by disproportionate deployment of state security forces – who were nowhere to be seen when the two lawmakers were assaulted. We demand that those responsible for the violence yesterday are held accountable, and properly punished.”

Am Sam Ath, LICADHO’s Technical Coordinator.

THE CRUMBLING VENEER OF DEMOCRACY

Disputes between the two leading political parties were not limited to mere rhetoric, or even to politically-motivated arrests – on October 26, two opposition MPs were left **beaten and bloodied** in an unprecedented mob attack just outside the gates of the National Assembly following an orchestrated protest calling for the removal of CNRP deputy leader Kem Sokha as the National Assembly’s first vice-president. On the same day, some of the demonstrators later formed a stone-throwing mob outside Kem Sokha’s house, calling for his removal.

Of the many assailants filmed participating in the attack on the two CNRP MPs, only three suspects were charged with the assaults after they turned themselves in following a public statement by the Prime Minister calling them to surrender. The three suspects are each members of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) linked to the Prime Minister’s Bodyguard Headquarters, and remain the only suspects currently charged with these assaults. In yet another demonstration of Cambodia’s culture of impunity, authorities stated that they will not proceed with further investigations, despite evidence that the assault was ordered and orchestrated.



A stone-throwing mob outside Kem Sokha’s house in Phnom Penh, October 2015.

Not even the Cambodian army was left out of the partisan intimidation campaign. National television broadcasts showed uniformed and armed soldiers demonstrating against Kem Sokha in Cambodia’s north-west Oddar Meanchey and Preah Vihear provinces, holding signs next to a row of machine guns. A further petition calling for the removal of Kem Sokha was released the same day, signed by the deputy commander of the RCAF Gen. Kun Kim and senior military commander Gen. Srey Duk, both members of the CPP’s central committee.

Opposition leader Sam Rainsy was also the focus of the government's ire. In November, the court issued arrest warrants against him relating to a years-old defamation case. As a result of the resurrected standing conviction, he was stripped of his position as a member of the National Assembly and is now once again in self-exile.

LAND CONFLICTS CONTINUE

The renewed wave of land conflicts which began in 2014 after a relatively peaceful election year continued into 2015, as poor communities continued to lose their land to powerful political and economic interests.

A [statement](#) made by LICADHO in February 2015 on the previous year's surge in land disputes was met by a blanket denial from the government, who claimed that their own data showed a reduction in the number of land disputes in recent years. So far, there has been no sign that the authorities are willing to address the multiple root causes of land conflicts: a corrupt and politically-obedient judicial system, the misuse of state forces, and collusion between well-connected companies and authorities.

In addition, the lack of a publicly available land register detailing state land boundaries means that when confiscating land, authorities can, and frequently do, claim that the affected families are living on state land. Without access to an accurate register there is little these families can do to dispute the authorities' claims, allowing for widespread abuse by the authorities.

2015 data suggests that land conflicts remain at an alarmingly high level. Many are related to Economic Land Concessions (ELCs). Of the [2.1 million hectares](#) in the hands of private companies as long-term leases, most take the form of ELCs. A moratorium on the granting of new ones declared by the Prime Minister in May 2012 has failed to prevent conflicts, as LICADHO continues to receive new reports of violations stemming from conflict with existing ELCs.

Ironically, a number of land disputes have stemmed from [Social Land Concessions](#) (SLCs) which are meant to address landlessness in Cambodia by re-allocating state land to poor families. Some of the first SLCs were implemented with a total disregard for the legal framework and failed miserably. The government's cornerstone SLC project, LASED, has been plagued by uncultivable land, shaky tenure security, and land conflicts. In December, Germany – one of the main donors to the LASED project – decided to [phase out](#) its bilateral support for land reform in Cambodia after 20 years of cooperation, citing lack of transparency and commitment to resolve land disputes.

Time and time again this year, communities affected by land conflicts stepped up their protests against the loss of their land and against environmental degradation.

Authorities and companies often responded with intimidation, violence and judicial persecution.

THE STRUGGLE FOR LABOUR RIGHTS

Cambodia's labour conflicts showed no sign of abating as heated debates over both the proposed Trade Union Law and a minimum wage for garment factory workers continued throughout the year. Both International Labour Day and International Human Right Day saw [thousands marching](#) for a living wage of \$177 a month and greater respect for freedoms of assembly, expression and association – particularly in the context of harmful draft legislation and lethal crackdowns on strikes. Companies outsourcing their production to Cambodia – such as H&M, Levi's, Gap, Puma, Adidas and Zara – were consistently [lobbied](#) to keep their supply chains accountable and pay workers a living wage.

Chhouk Bandith, who shot and injured three protesting garment factory workers in 2012 and was on the run since his conviction and sentencing for 'unintentional violence' in 2013, [turned himself in](#) on August 8 less than a week after the Prime Minister called for his arrest during a public speech. He was transferred to Phnom Penh's CC1 prison in December. By the end of the year he was [no longer behind bars](#) at all, but "receiving treatment" for alleged diseases in a private room at the Khmer-Soviet Friendship Hospital.

Chhouk Bandith's short-lived incarceration was nevertheless to prove a high point of accountability. As of the end of 2015, there has still been [no justice](#) for those shot during the lethal crackdown on striking workers in January 2014 in which at least four people were killed and countless injured with apparent total impunity. In stark contrast, 23 workers and human rights defenders arrested during the protests were groundlessly convicted on scant evidence of aggravated intentional violence, aggravated intentional destruction of property, obstruction and insult after deeply flawed trials.

Nor has there been a credible inquiry into the whereabouts of missing 16 year old Khem Sophath, last seen bloodied on the ground during the protests with a serious chest wound. His whereabouts remain unknown.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

2015 was also marked by repeated breaches by Cambodia of its obligations under international law regarding the protection of some of the most vulnerable – refugees and asylum seekers.

In direct violation of the Refugee Convention, which Cambodia ratified in 1992, Cambodia forcibly [deported](#) at least 54 Vietnamese asylum-seekers in the first half of 2015 – and spent the second half of the year threatening to deport many more. Authorities refused throughout



Land activists marching through Kampong Speu province, December 2015

the year to register as asylum seekers around 100 Montagnards – members of ethnic minority groups who fled from Vietnam’s central highlands – who had succeeded in reaching Phnom Penh.

On April 29, Gen. Sok Phal, head of the General Department of Immigration, escalated the threat to the Montagnard asylum seekers and also threatened to take action against the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Describing the asylum seekers in Phnom Penh as “illegal Vietnamese immigrants,” Sok Phal [accused](#) UNHCR of conspiring with them and asserted that “[Cambodian] law says that any individual that has conspired with [illegal] immigrants must be condemned.”

In September, the Ministry of Interior announced that the Montagnards who had been turned away from having their asylum claims processed had [three months](#) to return home or be forcibly refouled. Of the 13 recognized refugees, Cambodia stated they would not be allowed to stay in the country and asked UNHCR to relocate them to a third country or also face forcible repatriation – once again, in direct contravention of Cambodia’s obligations under international law.

Cambodia’s treatment of Montagnard refugees starkly contrasts with their policy of accepting refugees from Australia. In June, four refugees arrived from Nauru as part of a controversial A\$40 million (US\$28 million) resettlement deal with Australia. The deal was widely [criticized](#) by national and international rights groups, in part because of Cambodia’s previous – and indeed current – treatment of refugees. The future of the deal looks rocky, however. By August, Cambodian authorities publicly [ruled out](#) taking more refugees, although eventually a fifth refugee arrived in the country in November while one of the original four opted to return to his home country.

LOOKING TO 2016

Throughout 2015, Cambodians mobilised to step up protests against LANGO in increasingly creative ways, with every protest and event filled with colour and vibrancy. And despite crackdowns on demonstrations and the ever-present threat of the criminal justice system, human rights defenders continued and even intensified their struggle for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Land and environmental activists continued to fight to save their land, often in cooperation with other groups and networks, against developers who seek to clear the land and evict the people. Unions continued their campaign for a fair minimum wage and better working conditions. Online activism continues to grow, although it remains to be seen to what extent Cambodia’s vibrant online community will be affected by the crackdown on free expression both on- and offline.

Cambodia’s civil society and space for dissent was attacked in 2015, and with more oppressive laws pending and 24 political prisoners still in jail, 2016 will likely witness similarly bleak trends. The approach of the 2017 commune elections and the 2018 national elections will add to human rights tensions in a climate already suffused with repression and obstruction of fundamental freedoms. As the shrinking of democratic space shows no signs of slowing, solidarity among civil society remains more important than ever.

Human Rights 2015 in Numbers

2 opposition MPs savagely assaulted by a mob during a ruling party-affiliated protest.

0 state security forces present who attempted to prevent the violence against the MPs.

24 political prisoners incarcerated by the end of the year. They included opposition supporters and officials, monks, environmental activists, and student activists.

15 minutes needed for judges to deliberate a sentence and provide a written judgement condemning 11 CNRP supporters and officials to up to 20 years' in prison.

17 NGO monitors, medics, journalists and villagers unlawfully detained during a peaceful Koh Kong protest.

150: Cambodia's ranking in Transparency International's 2015 Corruption Perception Index – out of 168 countries. It received a score of 21, which is the lowest in Southeast Asia.

4 months that Chhouk Bandith spent in jail after shooting three female garment factory workers during a protest in February 2012.

10,579 families affected by newly-investigated land disputes in 2015.

2.1 million hectares of Cambodian land covered by large-scale land concessions.

\$128: minimum monthly wage for garment factory workers as of December 2015.

\$177: monthly income required to live decently according to a 2013 Ministry of Labour study.

20 years that LICADHO celebrated International Human Rights Day in Prison before it was forced to cancel them in 2015 due to unnecessary restrictions.

59 women released from behind bars after LICADHO's "Childhood Behind Bars" report, along with 47 young children.

10,000 participants in International Human Rights Day celebrations.

60 countries which have introduced new laws to stifle NGOs in the last three years, including Cambodia.

2 anti-LANGO songs produced by LICADHO during a hard-fought campaign to stop repressive legislation.

MONITORING & PROTECTION



Anti-LANGO protesters sit on police barricades outside Cambodia's National Assembly, July 2015.

Human rights abuses in Cambodia are widespread, creating sizeable challenges for human rights groups. Rule of law is weak and the judiciary is beset with corruption, meaning the rich and powerful can infringe on the rights of others with impunity. Freedom of expression and assembly are regularly curtailed on spurious grounds, while killings, physical assaults and arbitrary arrests of political opponents, grassroots activists and members of the press are committed with little to no accountability.

Although on paper men and women enjoy equal rights, the reality is very different. The corrupt judicial system makes it very difficult for victims of abuses to seek justice, and continues to work against women who are unable to pay the expenses demanded by the courts. Many in local communities, both urban and rural, remain unaware of women and children's rights, particularly in relation to violence against women and child labor.

Monitoring and investigating human rights abuses – whether civil and political rights violations or those relating specifically to women and children – is a core aspect of LICADHO's work. It informs every other aspect of the organization's programs: humanitarian assistance to communities, human rights defenders or victims of

human rights violations; advocacy, through collecting evidence of abuses and documenting stories of human rights violations; and negotiations with authorities. The Monitoring Office often serves as the first port of call for LICADHO's clients before referrals to other organisations or offices as necessary.

Human Rights Monitoring Project - Civil and Political Rights



10,579

Families affected in land grabbing cases newly investigated by LICADHO in 2015.

75

Cases closed that were investigated in 2015. 71 were resolved by the courts, other authorities or by out-of-court compensation.

184

Victims of human trafficking (16 female; 168 male) repatriated from China, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Japan, Russia and South Africa with assistance from LICADHO.

Under the Human Rights Monitoring Project (HRMP), LICADHO's human rights monitors in Phnom Penh and 13 provinces investigate reports of civil and political rights violations perpetrated by both the state and private interests, compile case reports and develop custom response strategies.

Through referral to other offices, the monitors assist victims to seek remedies, including medical and psycho-social care, material support, and legal counseling. Cases often come to the HRMP through clients or their families directly, as well as through referrals by partners working in community-based groups, peoples' networks, unions, the media and other NGOs.

During 2015, LICADHO's monitors investigated 361 new human rights abuse cases. These investigations included gathering evidence and working with communities as well as interviewing victims, community members, and local authorities. The most common source of violations encountered by the human rights monitoring team in 2015 was once again land conflicts. Ninety-seven newly-investigated cases involved multiple families that fell victim to land grabbing or forced evictions perpetrated by the state or other powerful actors. These cases affected a total of 10,579 families. The number of newly documented cases and victims in 2015 is similar to the number documented by LICADHO in 2014, continuing the surge witnessed following national election year in 2013.



Community members and supporters call for the release of three Mother Nature activists outside Koh Kong provincial court, August 2015.

The front line of change: Monitoring a land dispute in Pursat

Support from LICADHO's monitors and lawyers helped 43 families claim their land after it was grabbed from them by Pheaphimex, a Cambodian company owned by CPP Senator Lao Meng Khim. The families had been living and working on the land since 1997, growing crops such as cane sugar, potato, mango and banana. The families' use and occupation of the land was recognized by local authorities but the families were never issued with hard land titles. The lack of land titles became particularly problematic when the administration zone of the commune changed in 2012.

Their land lay at the edge of a 330,000-hectare ELC, the largest in the country, granted to Pheaphimex in 2000. In February 2015, Pheaphimex workers came and cleared the land with excavators, destroying people's crops and livelihoods.

The community, faced with losing their livelihoods, protested to local and provincial authorities but without land titles their prospects seemed bleak. However, the families refused to give up, asking LICADHO to support their fight as they continued to protest.

LICADHO monitors gathered evidence of the families' continued habitation of the land and provided legal consultations. LICADHO advised the families on their rights and the legitimacy of their ownership claims in accordance with the Land Law, which provides possessory rights to people continuously occupying land since before 2001. Working closely with LICADHO's lawyers, monitors supported the families and intervened with the local and provincial authorities, reminding them of their obligations under the law.

In August, after months of protests and numerous interventions from LICADHO, the governor of Pursat agreed to negotiate with the company. Each family received one and a half hectares of land and the crucial land titles to which they were entitled.

Bringing them home: Women trafficked to China as brides

29-year-old Prum Kosal was trafficked from Kandal province in 2014. She met a woman, Chan, who convinced her to travel to China with promises of jobs and opportunities. Chan also offered to take responsibility for Kosal's travel documents. In May 2014, Kosal left for China, accompanied by a Chinese man. Once in the country, the same man gave the trafficking broker 100,000 Y (over \$15,000). The two were married; her new husband confiscated her passport.

It quickly became clear to Kosal that her new life was not the one she had signed up for. Her new husband worked away from home and she lived with his family. She had no money and often insufficient food. Worse was to come, however. In October 2014, her new father-in-law attempted to rape her. Kosal fled. She was able to stay with a Cambodian who lived nearby, and eventually made contact with her mother back in Cambodia.

In May 2015, her mother contacted LICADHO. On LICADHO's advice, both mother and daughter made contact with the Cambodian embassy in China. Embassy staff arranged for temporary housing in a shelter; however, conditions in the shelter were very poor and Kosal soon developed serious health problems. Two months later, amid ongoing discussions with LICADHO monitors, the embassy staff in China moved her once more – this time, to detention under China's immigration authorities. LICADHO staff continued to lobby the embassy to bring Kosal home. In September, the embassy confirmed that they had secured a flight home for Kosal. Eventually, four months after first contacting LICADHO, she came back to Cambodia.

In 2015, LICADHO assisted with the repatriation of nine such women who had been trafficked to China as brides.

The number of human trafficking cases documented by LICADHO in 2015 somewhat decreased compared to 2014 and 2013. Nevertheless, it continues to be a worrying issue, particularly in the light of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with Malaysia in December 2015 to once again send domestic workers to Malaysia and continued negotiations on a similar MoU with Saudi Arabia.

From January to December, LICADHO documented 72 new cases of human trafficking, including 46 cases of labour trafficking and 24 cases of women trafficked for sexual exploitation. Many of the sexual exploitation cases involved women being trafficked to China in the context of arranged or forced marriages. LICADHO's monitoring team assisted with the repatriation of 184 (16 female, 168 male) Cambodians who had been trafficked to seven different countries.

Deaths continue at Prey Speu Social Affairs Centre

Two unlawfully detained people died in the notorious Prey Speu Social Affairs Centre in 2015 – the second and third death in less than a year. According to several witnesses interviewed with first-hand knowledge of the deaths, one man, aged between 40 and 50 and reportedly mentally ill, drowned during Cambodia's Pchum Penh celebration (October 11 – 13) in a small pond within the walls of Prey Speu. Days after, a woman in her 30s – detained in the centre alongside her husband - died on the evening of October 16. An investigation by LICADHO monitors revealed that the cause of her death was not established prior to her cremation. It is unclear how many people remain detained in Prey Speu centre. Earlier this year, police rounded up hundreds of homeless people in Phnom Penh, detaining them in Prey Speu in a series of 'street sweeps'. Those targeted included homeless people, beggars, drug users and sex workers, who are typically sent to the centre for 'training and education'.

Enslaved on fishing boats

All 159 men repatriated from forced labour on fishing boats in Indonesia had been promised work in factories and construction sites in Thailand, but had instead been sent to work on boats. Conditions on the boats were horrific, all were forced to work long hours without sufficient food or medical treatment. In the latter half of 2014, several boats were picked up in Indonesian waters by authorities and all the trafficked workers on board were arrested.

Since their respective arrests, the Cambodian embassy in Indonesia undertook interventions with Indonesian authorities, cooperating with organizations including the Indonesian and Cambodian offices of the International Organization for Migration and other national and international NGOs to facilitate their return to Cambodia. Upon their return to Cambodia, LICADHO provided services to facilitate their integration: legal consultations, medical services and short-term material support for food, shelter and medicine.

Apart from land grabbing and human trafficking, LICADHO monitors further documented 44 illegal arrests/detentions (compared to 40 in 2014), 43 physical assaults (64 in 2014) and 27 cases involving obstruction to freedom of assembly/expression (39 in 2014); 14 cases involving killings (12 in 2014) and four mob killings (three in 2014).

LICADHO monitors also provided para-legal advice to the victims of the cases investigated, and in 198 of the 361 cases investigated conducted direct interventions, including meetings with police, courts and other authorities; or assisting the victims to submit complaints and petitions. As a result of Cambodia's dysfunctional law enforcement and judiciary, it usually takes a long time for authorities to properly address the cases brought to their attention by LICADHO. However, around 20% of the newly opened cases in 2015 have already been closed.



LICADHO monitors interview family of a human trafficking victim, January 2015

Monitors were deployed for 400 observations throughout the year, including attending court hearings, monitoring and supporting community protests and union strikes. When problems occur during protests, LICADHO monitors attempt to mediate between authorities and protesters, and document any rights violations that occur. For instance, on May 22, 2015, around 700 members of different communities from Siem Reap province affected by land grabbing gathered in the provincial capital to march and submit a petition to the provincial governor. Around 100 police and military police officers blocked the road and pushed the protesters back, preventing the group from marching, citing the possibility of traffic disruption. LICADHO monitors were at the site of protest and intervened to avoid violence. Eventually in the afternoon, 17 representatives were allowed to meet with the governor whilst the other community members waited outside.

Disproportionate deployment and blocking of peaceful demonstrations by state forces and para-police units were evident throughout the anti-LANGO campaign, as well as International

Women's Day, World Habitat Day and International Human Rights Day (IHRD). On July 18, five female protesters were held for several hours at a police station in central Phnom Penh after being detained when distributing anti-LANGO stickers at a peaceful event. The activists were supported by a number of LICADHO monitors and a lawyer before eventually being released without charge.

LICADHO noticed further restrictions in its work and narrowing of civic space after LANGO was passed. On September 2, 17 individuals, including LICADHO, ADHOC and Mother Nature staff members, media workers and protesters were temporarily detained in Koh Kong's

provincial police station in the midst of a gathering calling for a solution to the Chi Khor Krom community's land conflict. The victims were held in detention for nearly eight hours before finally being released following intervention by LICADHO senior staff and lawyers from the Phnom Penh office, who assisted the detained activists at the provincial police station. Then in December 2015, LICADHO and ADHOC coordinators in Banteay Meanchey province were called for questioning by the Banteay Meanchey court on the day of the arrest of a land activist leading a protest in Poipet commune. The nature of the questioning was clearly intended to intimidate and deter future NGO support for local activists.

Women's Rights Monitoring Project



LICADHO's women's rights monitoring project (WRMP) investigates cases of domestic and sexual violence against women. Cases come to LICADHO from a variety of sources including direct requests from victims or victims' relatives, referrals by other NGOs, and media reports. The WRMP bridges the gap between the law and the reality on the ground for women across Cambodia, who often have virtually non-existent access to justice owing to official corruption, impunity and a culture of silence surrounding crimes that occur within the home.



Calling for respect of women's rights in Phnom Penh on International Women's Day, March 2015

violence unfortunately remains rare, even with LICADHO support. Social pressure to stay married combined with police apathy often deter women from pursuing a criminal complaint. However, each year, a small number of cases do result in successful prosecutions.

In one such case a woman was punched in the stomach by her husband causing her to miscarry. This was not the first time the husband had used violence but on this occasion, an elderly female neighbour came to help and the husband punched her also. The neighbour went immediately to the

police who detained the husband in the police station. LICADHO monitors investigated the case and provided material support to the victim and her family. They referred her to another NGO for legal representation and worked with that NGO to provide support to the victim until her case was tried. In July 2015, her husband was convicted of violence by a spouse and sentenced to two years in prison.

CASES AND INTERVENTION

From January to December 2015 LICADHO investigated 216 cases involving women, with domestic violence (137 new cases) and rape (72 new cases) the most common types of violations – as they have consistently been in recent years. LICADHO's women's rights monitors also investigated six indecent assault cases, and one acid attack.

Similarly to rape, prosecution in cases of domestic

Abusing the most vulnerable

Women and children with sensory and mental disabilities are often the victims of rape and in these cases convictions can be particularly difficult to achieve. In one rape case from 2014 a 25-year-old woman who was blind and had learning difficulties was raped by her neighbour after he had lured her into a field by offering her fruit. A woman living nearby heard noises coming from behind her house and went outside to investigate. She witnessed the rape and shouted at the perpetrator to stop. She was scared to approach so went to get her brother-in-law. By the time they returned the perpetrator had run away.

LICADHO investigated the case together with staff from the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Because the victim was unable to identify the perpetrator and found it difficult to give evidence, the witness evidence was extremely important in this case. Poor communications and the lack of a postal service mean that courts often fail to deliver summonses to victims and witnesses. In this case, LICADHO staff maintained close contact with the court clerk and obtained copies of the court summonses and delivered them to the relevant parties so they were able to meet the investigating judge and attend the trial. On 5th May 2015 the perpetrator was convicted of rape with aggravating circumstances and sentenced to eight years in prison and ordered to pay \$500 compensation.

Children's Rights Monitoring Project



LICADHO's children's rights monitoring project (CRMP) investigates a range of abuses of children including rape, physical assault and child labour. As with women's rights cases, LICADHO's monitors provide basic material support and medical services to victims. They also provide legal services and support the victims' families through the legal process.

From January to December, the CRMP team investigated 242 cases of child rights abuse, affecting 259 children (247 girls and 12 boys). 91 of these child victims were under 10 years old. Rape was by far the most common form of child rights violation investigated by LICADHO. Between January and December 2015 LICADHO investigated 202 rape cases, including 11 gang rape cases, accounting for 83% of the total cases investigated. Because of under-resourced policing and corruption throughout the judicial

system it can often be difficult to secure prosecutions. However, in some cases it is possible to achieve some justice for victims.

The Child Rights Advocacy Office (CRO) and their partner Child Protection Networks (CPGs) use their community networks to alert LICADHO's child rights monitors about cases of child rights abuse. This year, the CPG network reported 28 child abuse cases to LICADHO in four target areas. The CRO staff and youth CPGs also provided moral support to some victims by visiting them in the hospital, or by accompanying them to file a complaint to both the police and child rights monitors. CRO closely works with LICADHO's social work team to alleviate some of the suffering; in 97 of the newly documented cases LICADHO also cooperated with partner NGOs who provide legal assistance, temporary shelters and social services.

Cambodia's gang rape epidemic

In April 2015, a 15 year-old-girl was drugged and raped by four men. One of the men had recently befriended the girl and asked her to give him a lift on her motorbike to the next town. When they arrived three other men appeared and took her motorbike key from her, saying they would return it if she had one drink with them. After drinking one beer the girl lost consciousness and the men took her to a nearby beach where they beat and raped her. Some villagers living nearby saw and intervened, managing to catch two of the perpetrators.

The girl was badly injured and was sent to hospital where she stayed for five days. LICADHO staff visited her in hospital and carried out an investigation where the rape took place. Women's rights monitors supported her throughout the court process and on December 23, the two men were convicted of rape and sentenced to 11 years each and ordered to pay fines of \$3,750 each. The other two men were never caught.

Unfortunately, this outcome is sadly common for gang rape cases. Police rarely make much attempt to track down all the perpetrators once they have caught at least one.



Human rights abuses adversely affect the overall well-being of individuals, families and communities. Peaceful protesters risk injuries as security forces as well as para-police and hired thugs are often deployed to violently suppress dissent; communities are confronted with the sudden loss of their homes and farmland causing food shortages and health problems; and imprisoned human rights defenders suffer from extremely poor prison conditions and their family members face immense hardship, as they are forced to find additional money to support their relatives and pay for prison visits. Cambodia is almost entirely devoid of social welfare services for citizens in need, leaving victims of human rights violations on their own.

LICADHO's social and medical teams work towards filling the gaps in services available for victims of human rights abuses, alleviating some of the most pressing problems. By providing some respite to the victims of human rights abuses, LICADHO not only helps to minimize the damage caused by human rights abuses, but also helps victims get back on their feet and continue standing up for their rights. As such, LICADHO's social and medical support compliments its monitoring and advocacy efforts.

SOCIAL WORK PROJECT

LICADHO's Social Work Project (SWP) works to provide short term assistance to victims of human rights abuses by delivering food, and other essential materials. For all recipients the SWP conducts detailed needs assessments of victims in order to determine the level of support LICADHO can offer.

In this way, the SWP works very closely with the Monitoring Office and Legal Office, who refer clients to the SWP for assistance. Often, such clients are those subjected to land grabs investigated by LICADHO's monitors, or individuals and families of human rights abuse victims represented by LICADHO's lawyers.

Throughout 2015 the SWP provided assistance to over 6,000 victims of human rights abuses across 15 provinces in Cambodia. The SWP also provided assistance to numerous community organized advocacy campaigns, facilitating the ability of Cambodians to promote respect for human rights.

Of the thousands of people who received support from the SWP throughout the year, 4,938 were victims of human rights abuses connected to land disputes. Other human rights abuses experienced by the victims included: human trafficking (188 individuals), rape (117 individuals), illegal arrests and detention (90 individuals), and domestic violence (41 individuals).

31

Imprisoned human rights defenders and twenty imprisoned political prisoners received food and material support from the Social Work Project. 45 families of prisoners received support from the SWP, allowing them to visit and support their relatives in prison.



Indigenous villagers affected by land-grabbing in Ratanakiri receive food aid from LICADHO, March 2015.

The SWP also provided assistance to 31 human rights defenders in prison. This included 21 land rights activists, five monks from the Independent Monk Network for Social Justice, and four environmental activists from Koh Kong province. Twenty political prisoners also received support from SWP. Prisoners in Cambodia are exposed to shocking conditions and without money to pay for them, prisoners are usually unable to access essential support services. SWP provided food supplies and monthly cash allowances to these prisoners in order to ensure they receive a basic standard of care. The SWP also provided support to 45

of the prisoner's families, including 191 individuals (79 females, 112 males). The support included food supplies as well as money to pay for family visits to prison and to ensure that the families' children are able to continue to attend school.

In addition to providing emergency food supplies and goods, SWP also continued piloting income generation and livelihood support services for selected individuals and families. In 2015, LICADHO tested chicken raising, support for farming and irrigation and support for motorcycle repair work for a selected number of families.

Strengthening advocacy through material support in Ratanakiri

In 2011, a Vietnamese company was granted an Economic Land Concession from the government. The company subsequently began clearing farmland of indigenous communities in Andong Meas, Borkeo and Ochum districts in Ratanakiri province. The communities immediately began to advocate for their land – but they were stymied by lack of resources.

Following the opening of LICADHO's Ratanakiri provincial office in late 2014, LICADHO's Ratanakiri monitoring team referred the case to the SWP. LICADHO social workers conducted an assessment of 212 affected families in Ochum district on January 14, 2015 and identified 70 families suffering from low income, unemployment and poor health – in other words, those most in need of assistance. On March 7, 2015 the SWP provided 2,100 kg of rice, 280 kg of salt, blankets and mosquito nets to 70 of the families, encompassing 288 individuals in total. LICADHO also distributed and demonstrated the use of 70 water filters donated by the UN.

The invaluable support has strengthened and encouraged the indigenous communities' continuing efforts as they advocate for compensation from the company.

MEDICAL PROJECT

Cambodia's healthcare system is extremely limited, even for those with the means to pay for services. A lack of affordable health care services as well as a shortage of trained doctors and properly equipped clinics means that many Cambodians – particularly the poorest – do not have access to adequate medical treatment. Victims of human rights abuses are often exposed to situations which have serious adverse physical and psychological effects.

LICADHO remains the only human rights organisation in Cambodia with a medical team that provides free medical services to victims of human rights abuses – in prisons, at relocation sites, to human rights defenders and on-the-ground during protests and demonstrations.

In 2015, LICADHO's medical team conducted 170 prison visits, providing 8,038 essential medical examinations and treatments. Common health problems in prisons tend to be infectious diseases, skin diseases, and environment-effected issues such as malnutrition and high blood pressure.

LICADHO doctors visited fourteen prisons on a regular basis during the first half of 2015. Unfortunately, from

August 2015, the General Department of Prisons, together with the Ministry of Interior, began denying LICADHO's medical team access. The medical teams have increased their visits to those prisons that continue to allow access and continue to offer ongoing response services in other prisons, and in hospitals used for sick detainees.

LICADHO's medical staff also accompanied human rights monitors during protests, rallies and marches, including Labour Day, World Habitat Day and International Human Rights Day. At these events the medical team provided on-site treatment to human rights defenders, labour and land rights activists. The medical team also assisted in providing general medical checkups and preventative

care to key human rights defenders and activists including 19 land activists, political prisoners and defrocked monks in prison

Furthermore, regular visits were conducted to four relocation sites near Phnom Penh, where thousands of families have lived in dire conditions for several years following forced evictions from their homes in Phnom Penh. A total of 4,477 medical consultations were conducted at these sites (including over 1,000 consultations with children). Further, 567 consultations were conducted for residents of Boeung Kak Lake and Borei Keila community in Phnom Penh, which are embroiled in long-standing land conflicts. Another 520 consultations were conducted of rural community members affected by land grabbing. This included communities affected by land disputes with companies that received Economic Land Concessions, such as Lor Peang community in Kampong Chhnang province and various communities in Koh Kong province.

5,564

Medical consultations for members of communities evicted or embroiled in land conflicts. 64% of the patients are female and 36% male, while nearly 20% are children.

8,038

Essential medical examinations and treatments conducted for inmates in 16 prisons; more than 75% of all victims treated by LICADHO staff throughout the year recovered from their originally diagnosed health problem.



LICADHO medical staff treat victims of forced evictions in Phnom Bat relocation site near Phnom Penh, November 2015.

Free the 19

LICADHO doctors continue to visit political prisoners in jail – when access allows – to provide medical treatment as a result of pre-existing illnesses and deterioration of health from poor prison conditions. While 19 political prisoners were incarcerated in the first half of the year, LICADHO doctors visited them weekly. The medical team made three special visits on January 6, 20 and 21, when one of the 19 – Ms. Phan Chhunreth – complained again of a heart problem which she had suffered from in December. LICADHO doctors intervened with prison medical staff to refer Chhunreth to a hospital after she was again diagnosed with a low heart rate and high blood pressure.

LICADHO's medical team accompanied Chhunreth to Calmette Hospital three times undergo consultations with heart specialists and to undergo a number of tests, including blood tests, X-rays, echocardiography, electrocardiography (ECG) and an abdominal ultrasound. LICADHO's president, a medical doctor, also consulted with heart specialists in France about Chhunreth's conditions. After consultations, the specialists advised Chhunreth to stop Digoxin, the medication which Chhunreth had long taken. After stopping the medication, Chhunreth's condition improved and her heart rate became healthier. LICADHO also covered the costs of Chhunreth's medical tests.

Aiding activists calling for the release of political prisoners in Koh Kong

August and September 2015 saw sustained protests by land rights activists in front of Koh Kong's provincial court calling for the release of three prisoners, all of whom work for local environmental NGO Mother Nature. The three had been arrested in August and detained since then.

Many of the individuals attending the gathering slept in a nearby football stadium, and over a three day period LICADHO's medical team provided both medical assessments and assistance to the attendees treating a variety of problems, including high blood pressure, colds and diarrhea. LICADHO conducted 107 medical treatments over these three days.

On September 1, the protest was violently dispersed by police and LICADHO's medical team treated five victims injured as a result. One child received a head injury when police pushed him down against a roadside curb. LICADHO's medical team treated the child on site. The medical team also treated four women injured from beatings perpetrated by security guards. One of the injured, a 35-year-old woman who was beaten on the head, received on-the-spot first aid from LICADHO doctors before they took her to the Koh Kong referral hospital. The medical team was able to negotiate with the hospital and they agreed to treat the woman free of charge. After a few nights the woman improved to a stable condition and was discharged from the hospital. The medical team assisted the woman in returning home and has provided ongoing medical check-ups since then.

Treating land protesters in Koh Kong

On September 19, 2015, over 300 people from Poy Japan village Batumsakor district, Koh Kong province, including men, women, and young children, protested in front of a Chinese company to call for a resolution to their ongoing land dispute.

The protesters blocked the road during the morning and called upon local authorities to intervene on behalf of the community to coordinate with the company and find an appropriate resolution. Police came in the afternoon, accompanied by security guards – however, far from assisting the community with their conflict, they violently broke up the protest. Some protesters were forced to scatter into the nearby forest, pagoda and other places to avoid being beaten.

LICADHO's medical team had been on hand throughout, and treated 28 patients, including 17 women land rights activists, during the protest.

Prison Project



Cambodia's prisons are grim places to be incarcerated, characterized by corruption and squalid conditions. For most inmates, cash flow dictates conditions of detention, treatment, family visits and access to basic needs such as food, water, daylight and fresh air. Those without money often sleep on bare concrete floors, are forced into the lowliest jobs and, in some cases, denied out-of-cell time.

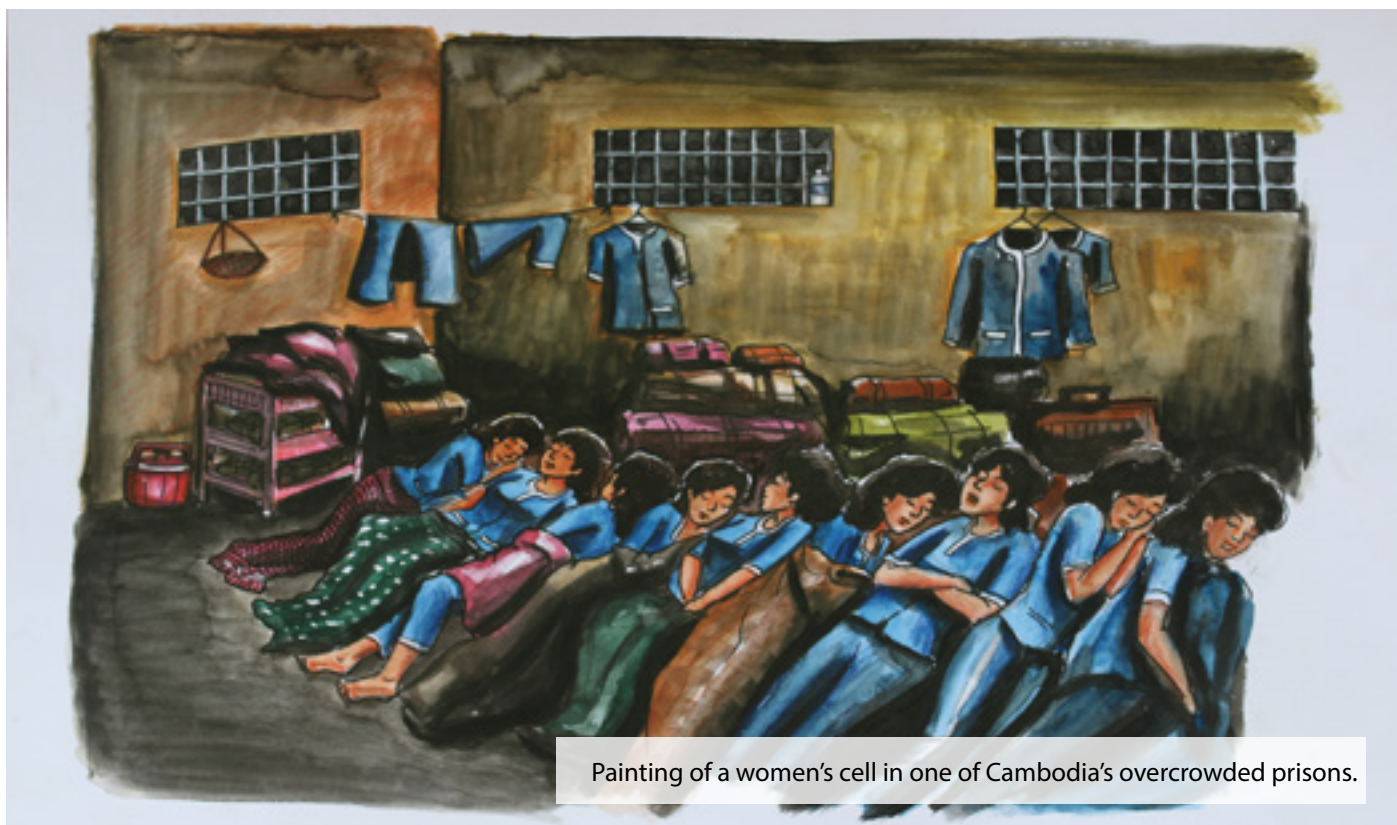
Levels of pre-trial detention remain particularly high with many documented cases of unlawful detention and long waits for appeal hearings. As of May 2015, approximately 25% of the prisoners in the prisons monitored by LICADHO had not yet faced trial and over 58% of the prisoners were still in the appeals process and had not received a final conviction. Pre-trial detainees are often held in worse conditions than convicted prisoners, with higher levels of overcrowding in pre-trial cells and pre-trial detainees receiving less out-of-cell time. The legal rights of convicted inmates are also routinely violated, with some detained past the end of their sentence.

LICADHO's Prison Project is tasked with monitoring 18 of Cambodia's 28 prisons¹ and advocating for the protection of prisoners' rights. The primary prison monitoring

mechanism has been weekly interviews with pre-trial detainees and convicts, family members of prisoners and released prisoners.

Through these interviews, LICADHO has been able to monitor prison conditions, identify prisoners with legal and medical needs, and uncover the occurrence of torture.

¹ Police Judiciaire (PJ), Correctional Center 1 (CC1), Correctional Center 2 (CC2), Correctional Center 3 (CC3), Correctional Center 4 (CC4), Takhmao, Kampong Som, Kampong Speu, Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Pursat, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, Svay Rieng and Koh Kong.



Painting of a women's cell in one of Cambodia's overcrowded prisons.

These interviews have also provided the groundwork for advocacy reports recommending systematic changes necessary to improve the recognition and protection of prisoners' fundamental rights.

2015 has been a year of two halves for LICADHO's Prison Project. LICADHO was able to achieve noteworthy success through both monitoring and advocacy activities during the first half of the year, but the second half of 2015 found the Prison Project having to adapt to increasing restrictions on prison access. These restrictions were imposed piecemeal across the country but in general coincide with a deteriorating environment for organizations as the government seeks to tighten control over voices critical of its human rights record.

PRISON MONITORING

During 2015, LICADHO researchers interviewed 714 prisoners who were either convicted or imprisoned under pre-trial detention. LICADHO's researchers also

conducted 159 interviews with released prisoners and 141 interviews with prisoners' families. Of these interviews, 610 were conducted in the first half of 2015 while 404 were conducted in the second half, with researchers placing greater focus on interviews with released prisoners and prisoners' families. Interviews are always voluntary and are conducted in a safe and secure environment. LICADHO researchers do not ask questions that could endanger inmates or compromise their conditions of detention if confidentiality cannot be assured.

LICADHO's activities also include performing interventions on behalf of prisoners who have been held in pre-trial detention beyond the legal limits and on behalf of prisoners who have long been awaiting their appeal hearing. As a result of LICADHO's interventions, between January and December 2015, 35 inmates held in pre-trial detention beyond the legal limit were finally tried at the municipal court level and 122 inmates finally had their appeals heard by the Court of Appeal.

Tried at last: Ending over-detention

On November 16, 2015 LICADHO received a complaint from a woman whose husband had been in pre-trial detention for over 13 months in Kandal provincial prison, also known as Takhmao prison. The man had been arrested and ordered into pre-trial detention at the beginning of October 2014 on charges of theft.

Theft is a misdemeanour offence and the maximum pre-trial detention period allowed by law is six months. After receiving the complaint, LICADHO's researcher confirmed that the accused had been over-detained by more than seven months, in violation of the Cambodian Code of Criminal Procedure. As such, LICADHO's researcher submitted an intervention letter to the Kandal provincial prosecutor asking for immediate action on the case. After multiple follow-ups by LICADHO's researcher, a trial was finally held two weeks later on December 1, 2015. The man was convicted at trial and sentenced to 15 months in prison. He was released from prison on December 31, 2015.



Many prisons locked their gates to LICADHO in the second half of 2015.

Increasing restrictions

On International Women's Day – 5 March 2015 – LICADHO was forced to cancel its annual activities in prisons, ongoing for the past 10 years. The activities have always been well received by the prisoners and used to be supported by the prison authorities, but for the past three years the scope of LICADHO's activities has been constrained ever further. Three months later, LICADHO was permitted to hold its full program of International Children's Day celebrations in prisons on June 1 (with the exception of CC2 prison). However, on International Human Rights Day – which LICADHO has celebrated in prisons for the past 20 years – restrictions imposed by the General Department of Prisons once more forced LICADHO to cancel its activities.

Nor were such restrictions limited to just international celebrations. During the second half of 2015, LICADHO's prison monitoring was similarly subjected to increasing restrictions. Beginning primarily in July 2015, LICADHO's Prison Project and medical teams have been denied permission to access prisoners and statistics at a number of prisons. LICADHO has thus far been unable to secure a new permission letter from the Ministry of Interior to continue its activities in 18 prisons in Cambodia. The restricted access has made it difficult for LICADHO to obtain accurate population statistics in the majority of the prisons usually monitored by LICADHO during the reporting period, and has hindered LICADHO's ability to intervene with the courts on behalf of prisoners awaiting trials or appeal hearings.

The Ministry of Interior's actions in refusing to renew the access permit thus far are consistent with a broader government agenda seeking to suppress NGO activities and come at the same time as the repressive Law on Associations and NGOs (LANGO) which allows the government to arbitrarily restrict the activities of civil society organizations throughout the country. Despite the increasing restrictions, LICADHO continues to offer prison directors assistance in providing medical treatment to prisoners and in submitting interventions to relevant courts to expedite trials and appeals in an effort to reduce prison overcrowding.



The Cambodian justice system is characterized by its level of endemic corruption and extensive political influence over the judiciary. Within this environment it is extremely difficult to secure respect for fair trial rights or any form of true justice. In 2015, a report from the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute found that corruption is inherent in every aspect of the justice system, from basic legal training up to the operation of the courts. The judiciary, prosecutors and lawyers themselves are often compromised, with the courts regularly being used as a repressive political tool.

This year's escalating crackdown on citizens and civil society, compounded by chronic misuse of the justice system, has resulted in numerous unfair convictions and detentions of political prisoners. In July, a number of LICADHO clients were imprisoned as part of the "CNRP 11," who received sentences of between seven and 20 years on trumped-up insurrection charges and after a severely flawed trial process. One of those clients, Ouk Pich Samnang, was later convicted of separate offences at a subsequent trial relating to a land protest despite a lack of evidence and a number of plaintiffs proactively stating Mr Samnang was not the perpetrator of violence against them. These cases are simply two examples of the widespread politically motivated abuse of the justice system that Cambodian citizens face on a daily basis.

LICADHO's lawyers provide high quality, specialist legal services to clients. Its primary activities include accompanying clients to interview with prosecutors and investigating judicial officials, defending clients at trial, pursuing appeals on behalf of clients, and investigating land disputes. LICADHO lawyers intervene promptly at each stage of the legal process on behalf of their clients: submitting evidence and witness statements when they are received; petitioning the prosecutor and investigating judge to dismiss cases when no inculpatory evidence exists; and arguing the merits of each case before the trial court, appellate court, and Supreme Court as necessary.

During 2015, the Legal Project received 31 new cases, assisting 76 clients, including 42 male clients and 34 female clients. The new case load for 2015 included 20 land grabbing cases in which lawyers assisted 49 clients (31 male clients, 18 female clients); two domestic violence cases assisting two clients (both were female); four special cases assisting six clients (three male, three female); four human rights defender cases assisting 18 clients (eight male, 10 female); and one rape case (assisting one female client).

In one land grabbing case, LICADHO lawyers represent 11 clients who are part of a community of 21 individuals who were victims of land grabbing and property destruction in Psah Kandal commune, Poipet district, Banteay Meanchey province. These clients now face charges of violence on private property under Article 253 of the Land Law. The case was first investigated by LICADHO monitors in September 2012, when it was reported that military excavators had seized and cleared 8.64 hectares of land occupied by 108 families. The LICADHO clients all have legal papers relating to their land; however, the plaintiffs in their case claim they have land title. It is expected that once additional individuals return from Thailand, LICADHO lawyers will

represent all 21 clients.

During 2015, LICADHO lawyers closed nine cases. These included four land grabbing cases involving 11 clients (three male, eight female); three special cases involving four clients (one male, three female); and two human rights defender cases, both of which were high-profile cases, involving 11 clients (one male, ten female). Two of these cases were closed following the issuing of Royal Pardons to eleven clients, including 10 female Boeung Kak Lake activists and the Venerable Seung Hai.

LICADHO lawyers regularly work with partners on cases, including co-representing clients in high profile cases. The Legal Project has co-defended alongside counsel from Cambodian NGOs CLEC, CENTRAL, ADHOC, CCHR and sometimes litigators employed by the opposition party CNRP¹. This strategy allows lawyers from different organisations to provide strong collaborative legal representation and reduce pressure or confrontation with the opposing parties.

One such case includes that of three imprisoned activists from NGO Mother Nature. LICADHO lawyers, along with co-defending counsel from two other Cambodian human rights NGOs, have provided ongoing legal representation since August for the trio, who have been held in pre-trial detention in Koh Kong prison on politically-motivated charges since their arrest.

During 2015, the Legal Project provided fair trial observation notes on a range of court proceedings, including four high profile political cases. The LICADHO legal team observed the "CNRP 11" trial for its duration, providing case notes from the outset through to the highly

¹ Community Legal Education Center (CLEC), Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL), Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC), and the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)



Ex-Dey Krahom community members commemorate the anniversary of their 2009 eviction.

Defending the innocent in Dey Krahom

In 2003 the government promised social land concessions (SLCs) to families living in Dey Krahom community, close to the Russian embassy in Phnom Penh, offered on the condition that the families agreed to relocation to SLCs on the same site as their existing homes while a private company would develop the rest of the land. This deal was completely reneged on by the developers and authorities: all the Dey Krahom land was lost to developers and the families were relocated to a site 20km away. The company, 7NG, moved in and began a campaign of coercion and intimidation to force the families to leave their homes.

In 2008 a number of community representatives were subject to complaints against them by 7NG and the Tonle Bassac local authority. Four men representing the community were wrongfully charged with defamation and fraud after using verified thumb printed documents another community – which was alleged to have received bribes from 7NG – later denied having provided. In 2009 the community suffered forced evictions and destruction of their homes. Despite being charged in 2008 the four clients – Chan Vichet, Dang Sarom, Soun Sineth and Khy Vin – only went on trial on 25 June 2015. LICADHO provided consistent interventions throughout the legal process. At the eventual trial, all charges against the men were dropped.

As well as providing legal services in this case, LICADHO's clients benefitted from increased knowledge of their rights and of the legal process following the involvement of LICADHO lawyers. In general, this form of intervention has had a generally positive effect on rights awareness and the capacity of individuals and communities to claim their rights, to hold authorities accountable and to ensure that the correct legal procedure is followed.

irregular conclusion of the trial.

Fair trial observation notes were also provided for the procedurally flawed trials of CNRP supporter Ouk Pich Samnang, and Pursat community representative Sam Saravuth. The LICADHO HRLP continues to provide ongoing observation of and fair trial notes on the trial of opposition senator Hong Sok Hour, who faces a range of spurious forgery charges relating to Facebook posts.

These notes give external partners strong insight into the dysfunctional and corrupt nature of the Cambodian legal system and emphasise the fair trial rights challenges faced by LICADHO lawyers and their clients on a daily basis.

ADVOCATING FOR A BETTER CAMBODIA

Communities celebrate International Human Rights Day in Banteay Meanchey, December 7, 2015.

Speaking Out for Justice



Evidence-based advocacy at the national and international level complements people-driven advocacy and grassroots campaigns. Specialized reports and high-level lobbying, informed and backed up by accurate field data, are essential for influencing policy-makers – as well as others who can effect change.

Strong advocacy, informed by LICADHO's staff on the ground, is at the heart of what LICADHO does. Through information garnered from monitors, doctors, lawyers and social workers, LICADHO amplifies the voices of Cambodians who have suffered human rights abuses, speaks out for justice and works with others to hold the Cambodian government accountable for its human rights abuses through specialized reports and direct high-level lobbying.

LICADHO uses a range of advocacy methods, from the production of written and audiovisual materials to direct contact with those in positions of influence. Common to all this work is the accuracy and clarity of the information transmitted.

2015 saw LICADHO continue ongoing campaigns for egregious human rights concerns in Cambodia – notably on land issues, prison abuses and Cambodia's rape epidemic.

REVEALING THE CORRUPTION THAT PLAGUES THE LAND SECTOR

Throughout 2015, LICADHO continued its calls for improved respect of land rights in Cambodia. In February, LICADHO released a [statement](#) highlighting a three-fold surge in land conflicts the previous year and criticizing Cambodia's dysfunctional land dispute mechanisms. The statement drew an immediate, strong reaction from the government which rejected LICADHO's figures as fabricated, claiming that their own data showed a reduction in the number of land disputes in recent years. Even after LICADHO [publicly released](#) its land conflict data from 2014 the government continued to deny the numbers. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction stated in a meeting that its provincial departments would cooperate with LICADHO to identify these conflicts and work towards resolving them.

LICADHO also continued to press the Cambodian government for greater transparency and accountability in its land concession policies. In an effort to get the government to disclose the full extent of land given away to private companies through concessions, LICADHO published its entire land concession dataset as an interactive map. Many of these concessions destroy livelihoods and natural resources. The link between Cambodia's significant deforestation rate and land concessions were highlighted in an additional map released by LICADHO using data gathered by the University of Maryland between 2000 and 2014.¹ The government has thus far failed to disclose the exact location of the over 2.1 million hectares of Cambodian land covered by existing land concessions.

land grabbing and a lack of transparency.

LICADHO met with Germany's Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the issue with officials, as well as with international NGOs, during a lobbying trip to Europe in March 2015. On the same trip, LICADHO also met Members of the European Parliament and international NGO representatives in Brussels, focusing on land conflicts – particularly those which result from land concessions. While the government and the World Bank completely ignored the criticism and continued praising the successes of the project, GIZ conducted an additional assessment of the project towards the end of the year. In this new "lessons learned" assessment GIZ echoes many of the shortcomings



The World Bank's Cambodia country office, Phnom Penh, November 2015.

LICADHO also raised serious concerns regarding social land concessions (SLCs), a land policy aimed at transferring land to landless and poor Cambodians. Investigations into the government's cornerstone SLC project, "Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development (LASED)", revealed that it has failed to reduce poverty largely due to a lack of political will and poor implementation. Despite the obvious shortcomings, the government and its donors, the World Bank and Germany's GIZ², publicly praised the project as hugely successful, claiming that it achieved substantial poverty reduction among beneficiaries as well as emerging as a replicable SLC model – inaccurate and highly problematic assertions on a sector plagued with

and problems identified by LICADHO's investigation.

LICADHO continues to lobby the World Bank to reassess its planned \$25-million LASED II project, including its problematic cooperation with the Ministry of Land Management. The World Bank would send the wrong political message if the ministry in charge of LASED II had not only been responsible for the failures of the first phase of LASED, but also caused the World Bank to suspend new loans from 2011. Meanwhile, at the end of 2015 Germany decided to **phase out** its bilateral support for land reform in Cambodia after 20 years of cooperation, citing lack of transparency and commitment to resolve land disputes as key reasons.

¹ LICADHO's maps and deforestation data were also used to inform a Cambodia Daily [feature piece](#) on deforestation, land concessions and the shocking loss of Cambodia's protected areas.

² Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmBH.



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

In November, to mark the global campaign 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, LICADHO published a [report](#) based on the outcomes of rape cases investigated by the monitoring team in 2012, 2013 and 2014. The report – titled “Getting Away With It: The Treatment of Rape in Cambodia’s Justice System” – examined the numerous flaws in the prosecution of rape cases in Cambodia and made recommendations to the Cambodian government to improve how rape cases are handled by the police and the courts.

The report presented evidence of the immense failure of the Cambodian justice system to properly investigate and prosecute cases of rape involving women and children. It provided details of multiple systemic flaws – corruption, discriminatory attitudes towards women and girls, misinterpretation of the law, and lack of resources – which, together, mean that many perpetrators of rape receive only very lenient punishment or go completely unpunished.

On the day the report was published LICADHO organized a call-in show on WMC radio to discuss the findings of the report and to hear from the father of a young rape victim. In the following days the report was also covered by Radio Free Asia and Voice of America. The report and the radio broadcasts were well-received by the public with many callers agreeing with the findings. It received extensive press coverage, in both Khmer and English language newspapers and news websites.

PRISON AMNESTIES FOR MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

Throughout 2015, LICADHO continued its advocacy campaign to try and improve prison conditions. Whilst historic problems such as overcrowding and corruption remain endemic, there were some positive developments following LICADHO’s reports in the first half of the year.

In response to LICADHO’s [report](#) “Childhood Behind Bars: Growing Up in a Cambodian Prison – Dara’s Story,” which detailed the experiences of “Dara” (not his real name), who lived with his incarcerated mother in Kandal provincial prison, Prime Minister Hun Sen announced the establishment of a committee of high-ranking officials to provide amnesties to pregnant women and women who were in prison with their young children. Soon after the Prime Minister’s announcement, Cambodian authorities [released](#) 22 women from prison, including one pregnant woman and 21 women with their 23 young children. A further 37 women were released ahead of Khmer New Year 2015 along with 24 young children.

In the wake of these amnesties, LICADHO released another [report](#), “Mothers Behind Bars: The Impact of Detention on Women and their Children,” looking at the impact of a mother’s detention on their children living outside of prison. LICADHO’s research revealed that the welfare of children is routinely ignored, not only at arrest, but throughout the whole judicial process and found that authorities, in particular judges and prosecutors, can dramatically improve the lives of many children by properly complying with existing legal procedures to reduce the number of mothers who are detained unnecessarily. In a positive response, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights incorporated LICADHO’s report and findings into a training they conducted for Cambodian judges and prosecutors on how to properly assess the need for pre-trial detention.

A teenage rape victim at her home, 2015.



Over 5 million

Hits on LICADHO's website. This is twice the number of hits than 2014.

772,344

People reached with LICADHO's Facebook posts.

Increasing LICADHO's social media reach

10,944 Facebook 'likes'

8,047 Twitter followers

94,452 unique website visits

Publications

45 flash news items

30 media statements

2 opinion pieces

4 articles

7 reports

4 photo albums

15 videos

3 livestreams

Singing for land rights

In 2015, LICADHO and the youth group CamASEAN worked with land rights activists from different provinces, including Preah Sihanouk, Ratanakiri, Koh Kong and Siem Reap, to produce and record songs related to land rights and land grabbing. LICADHO and CamASEAN conducted two preparatory workshops in Koh Kong and Ratanakiri provinces to exchange experiences and collect ideas for the songs. The land activists then attended a series of workshops in Phnom Penh, where the songs were written and recorded. In total 20 songs were written and nine recorded, including one song in an indigenous language. CDs with the nine songs were printed and widely distributed, and the popular radio station Voice of Democracy (VOD) played some of the songs in December 2015.

INNOVATIVE ADVOCACY

LICADHO's public advocacy – shared locally, nationally and internationally – ensures that Cambodia's human rights concerns can be shared on a wider stage. Throughout 2015, LICADHO continued to develop its online presence and its use of innovative audio-visual materials that attract attention and lead to action.

In a country with [low literacy rates](#), one of the best ways to share information with Cambodians across the country is through video – and together with LICADHO Canada, LICADHO has developed its video project significantly as part of the organisations' renewed emphasis on ICT.

Throughout the year, LICADHO produced and disseminated six advocacy videos, including one advocacy [music video](#) based on a classic Cambodian song, "I Don't Accept It," illustrating the impact of LANGO on civil society space and freedom of assembly in Cambodia. LICADHO and LICADHO Canada do not just produce advocacy videos: throughout the year, the organisations produced seven tutorial videos designed to increase the capacity of their grassroots partners in filming on smartphones.

LICADHO and LICADHO Canada disseminate videos through YouTube, Vimeo and direct uploads to Facebook. LICADHO continues to use as many methods of dissemination as possible to reach as wide an audience as possible – thus increasing exposure of the videos and, therefore, of the issue.

During 2015, LICADHO produced 45 flash news items and 30 (independent and joint) statements on significant human rights developments and events. Throughout the year, LICADHO increasingly produced more news items relating to events in the provinces. This increasing number of advocacy outputs relating to events in the provinces is a testament to training in photography and the use of smartphones delivered to LICADHO's provincial staff as well as partner grassroots groups.

As Cambodia's internet access expands, so does LICADHO's reach. Both LICADHO's social media and website audiences increased in 2015. The reach of LICADHO's Facebook page peaked at 156,986 due to a [video](#) produced by United States-based partner NGO Witness, illustrating human rights defender and video activist Pen Chanborey. The video follows Chanborey as he documented the appeal trial of 11 land activists wrongly imprisoned in 2014. The video went viral: it was shared 1,000 times and was viewed 25,748 times on Facebook.

LICADHO's [livestream](#) again proved a popular and effective way of disseminating information about events witnessed by LICADHO's monitoring team on the ground, and also to provide explanation and context for those events as they unfold. The Advocacy Office produced three livestreams over 2015, and continue to improve them in terms of content and format. Each livestream was produced simultaneously in English and Khmer, with graphics, maps and other

tools that allow individuals to locate human rights related events more easily, and assist them in sharing information more quickly, reliably and accurately.

In another example of innovative video advocacy, LICADHO and youth CPGs published a video storybook, “[The Last Day of Lang Reng](#),” written and illustrated by youth CPGs with support from LICADHO. The fictional storybook follows two children from the future, Mora and Riya, who land on the planet of Lang Reng to find that its environment is destroyed and most of its animals extinct due to corruption among the planet’s leaders.

The youth CPGs wrote the storybook to comment on the rapid deforestation and illegal logging occurring in Cambodia. They chose to release the storybook on November 20 to commemorate the 26th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and to highlight the fact that environmental destruction has many far-reaching and irreversible consequences, including jeopardizing the four baskets of children’s rights.

As well as extensive coverage in local newspapers, both English and Khmer language, information shared and footage taken by LICADHO’s offices was used in publications across the globe including the [Guardian](#), the [Diplomat](#), [Al Jazeera](#) and [Reuters](#). Nine international filmmakers, TV stations and other groups requested raw video files from LICADHO and LICADHO Canada. Support did not just stop with sharing footage: in December, LICADHO staff also facilitated a Danish TV crew to film land rights activists in Sihanoukville for a television programme which aired in Denmark in early 2016.

International advocacy

Throughout the reporting period LICADHO contributed to and edited key documents and reports from international NGOs, UN agencies, embassies and international unions. In March, LICADHO, along with the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and ADHOC, published a [shadow report](#) for the UN Human Rights Committee as they assessed Cambodia’s compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights for the first time since 1998.

The Shadow Report documented the government’s failure to respect, protect, and fulfill the fundamental civil and political rights guaranteed by the ICCPR.

ICT as a tool for human rights advocacy at home and abroad

In April, LICADHO and LICADHO Canada met civil society and fair trade groups from Denmark and Sweden, including Civil Rights Defenders, Clean Clothes Campaign, Danish labour associations, Save the Children, Fair Trade DK and other civil society groups to highlight the importance of internet development in Cambodia, and using audiovisual tools to attract people regardless of their age, literacy and whether they are urban or rural. Throughout the meetings, and during one [public panel](#) in Copenhagen, LICADHO and LICADHO Canada explained how safe communication through smartphones has helped peoples’ movements across Cambodia and how important it is for Denmark to continue supporting grassroots movements and ICT projects in Cambodia.



Amplifying Grassroots Advocacy



As Cambodian civil society grows in strength and courage, demands for land and workers' rights continue to get louder. However, repressive legislation, violent crackdowns on peaceful protests and a corrupt judicial system, which reduces democratic space and hinders accountable development, threatens to restrict such grassroots networks. For many Cambodians with little or no recourse to justice, public protest can be the only way of voicing concern – but it can be a risky activity, with stakes as high as injury, imprisonment or even death. Nevertheless, such movements continue to mobilise to actively contribute to national development – mobilisation which will become increasingly decisive as the next election period approaches.

On the ground, LICADHO provides legal assistance, monitoring, protection and capacity building services to unions, grassroots groups and affected communities who are attempting to claim their rights. Such assistance is essential in sustaining grassroots civil society movements, which came under increasing attack in 2015. LICADHO's advocacy support to grassroots partners builds courage and amplifies their voices to a wider audience.

Through sending leaders of peoples' groups to attend regional and international forums, where they can represent their members and the issues they face, or through lobbying international stakeholders, both governmental and private, LICADHO's international advocacy support raises the voices of the people and links them with local, regional and international groups and networks, resulting in far greater collective pressure.

Secure digital communication

Over 150 grassroots activists and LICADHO staff received training in secure communication with smartphones in 2015. This is particularly important in the light of growing concerns about the government's use of a so-called "Cyber War Team", and its push to pass the Cybercrime Law.



One of the 19 land and political activists imprisoned at the start of the year outside the Appeal Court in Phnom Penh, January 2015.

FREE THE 19

The first half of the year saw a sustained [campaign to free 19](#) political activists, land activists and defrocked monks who had been detained following a wave of arrests towards the end of 2014. LICADHO assisted all 19 through its various projects until their release in April 2015 – as well as providing legal representation to all 19, LICADHO joined and monitored protests held to call for their release, and supported advocacy events organized by the communities in Phnom Penh and outside Prey Sar CC1 and CC2 prisons.

Through information gathered by LICADHO's monitoring team and legal team, LICADHO's advocacy

SUPPORTING PEACEFUL PUBLIC PROTESTS

The many grassroots protests, demonstrations and gatherings that LICADHO supported between January and December related to a range of human rights concerns voiced by Cambodians, from land to labour to repressive legislation. The following list provides just a few examples from the year:

- On March 2, LICADHO staff monitored a protest by around 140 people from two villages in Svay Leu district, Siem Reap province, who tried to march to the office of the Siem Reap provincial governor to submit a petition and request the governor to find a solution for the land conflict affecting the villagers. However, the villagers



About 1,500 people celebrate World Habitat Day in Phnom Penh, October 2015.

program was able to conduct widespread domestic and international awareness on the arrests and detention of the 19. This involved the release of numerous flash news items to inform the public of campaign events, as well as joint statements released to international media, donor countries, embassies, international NGOs and UN representatives. Increased awareness resulted in representatives from the UN, international donors, and foreign embassies applying greater international pressure on the government and the judicial system.

From January until their release, LICADHO supported seven public protests and demonstrations in support of the 19. On some occasions, this also involved preparatory meetings with community representatives before each of the activities while providing various advocacy materials, covering transport costs for protesters, and providing food and water on the days of each activity.

were blocked by around 40 police officers, led by the deputy district governor of Svay Leu district. LICADHO staff mediated between authorities and protesters and provided advice to the villagers.

- On July 20, 250 farmers from Svay Rieng, Sihanoukville and Takeo gathered at the National Assembly in Phnom Penh to submit petitions relating to land disputes. Some of the conflicts date from 2011, and together have affected nearly 2,000 families across the two provinces. Authorities blocked a group of about 200 people from Romeas Heak district in Svay Rieng from going to Phnom Penh to join the rally.

- On December 2, about 100 people gathered outside Ratanakiri court to protest the sentencing of three community representatives to two years in prison. All three received maximum prison sentences. After the verdict, supporters were pushed away from the entrance of the courthouse by armed military police.



Marching through rural Kampong Speu province to celebrate International Human Rights Day, December 7, 2015.

International Human Rights Day: Standing united for justice

On International Human Rights Day (IHRD) – the first country-wide human rights event after LANGO was passed – hundreds of communities, grassroots groups, unions and youth networks came together to celebrate and to call for action, often in defiance of authorities. Suitably for a year which ended with 24 political prisoners incarcerated in Cambodia’s prisons, the theme was “Justice.”

Across five days of actions, beginning on December 5 and culminating on December 10, about 10,000 people from land rights communities, unions, youth networks, NGOs, associations, and indigenous communities, joined together for IHRD 2015 in 20 events across 15 provinces and Phnom Penh. The events included public forums, tree planting, monk prayers, screenings of human rights videos, speeches, and marches, including one three-day march through Kampong Speu.

Organisers and participants advocated on issues including:

- Resolutions to land conflicts across the country;
- Reform of the judicial system and release of imprisoned human rights defenders and activists;
- A raise in the minimum wage to the living wage, and commitment to respect labour rights;
- An end to state-sponsored violence, particularly in the context of demonstrations; and
- Respect for freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

The event was organized by Friends of December 10, an informal group of human rights defenders. LICADHO is a member of Friends of December 10 and was involved throughout the planning process, contributing administrative resources and providing meeting rooms. LICADHO sent monitors to the events; medical staff deployed to four events – including the three-day march in Kampong Speu – ensured the participants stayed healthy and safe throughout, and were able to join the concluding events on December 10. LICADHO’s advocacy, including a three-day [livestream](#), ensured that information and photos from the events were disseminated swiftly and accurately to viewers in Cambodia and abroad.

The 2015 campaign activities reinforced closer understanding and cooperation amongst cross-sectoral groups and renewed confidence and commitment amongst key organisers and communities.

Crucially, it served as a demonstration both to the Cambodian government and within Cambodian civil society itself that groups remain united in the face of repressive laws, imprisonment of activists and widespread human rights abuses, and will continue to stand together in their struggle for justice.

Advocating Against Repressive Laws



From when Prime Minister Hun Sen announced his intention to pass LANGO to the date of its promulgation, the looming and ever-increasing threat of the law set the backdrop for countless demonstrations in Phnom Penh and the provinces. From July, opposition stepped up in the form of near-daily demonstrations against the law, mobilising thousands of people. The colour and vibrancy of the campaign was evident: civil society groups drew strength from their collaborative lobbying and cooperative advocacy to protest the law in innovative and interesting ways. Here are just some examples among the dozens of anti-LANGO events and protests:

- June 28-30: on the third of a [three-day campaign](#) which began on June 28, hundreds of community and civil society groups, including youths, farmers, land activists, NGOs, media, monks and citizens, tried to march from four different locations around Phnom Penh toward the National Assembly in protest against LANGO. Police and security guards were deployed to stop the groups marching to the National Assembly, but 350 protesters managed to gather outside to continue their protest.

- July 7: 650 people from various civil society groups [gathered](#) in Phnom Penh to march once more on the National Assembly. As part of the campaign, youth activists and protesters rewrote the lyrics to a classic Cambodian pop song, so the song instead asserted the right of civil society groups to gather and express themselves.

- July 24: over 400 people from grassroots groups, unions, monks' groups and other associations gathered outside to protest against LANGO as it was debated by the Senate. Protesters had gathered outside the Senate in the early morning, singing, holding anti-LANGO banners, and distributing stickers as monks performed a Buddhist ceremony symbolizing rejection of the law. Protesters also submitted a petition from grassroots groups, unions and NGOs calling on the Japanese Embassy to take action over the law.

Often, LICADHO's support involved preparatory meetings with community representatives prior to the events while providing various advocacy materials, covering transport costs for protesters, and providing food and water during the events.

MOBILISING CAMBODIA'S YOUTH

In partnership with LICADHO's Child Rights Office (CRO), youth Child Protection Groups (CPGs) were heavily



Anti-LANGO protesters march through Phnom Penh, July 2015.

involved in the local and international campaign to stop the passage of LANGO. At the peak of the campaign in June and July, youth CPGs worked closely with frontline grassroots activists to write the lyrics to a song used by civil society groups to condemn LANGO.

RAISING VOICES

As LANGO edged closer to passage, LICADHO and other civil society organisations supported the protests through extensive advocacy outputs. From May to August, LICADHO published three statements on the law, one [legal analysis](#) of the law released as a briefing paper, two [livestreams](#) – one focusing on an extensive march against LANGO and one on a series of protests held just before the law was passed – eight flash news articles, and one [opinion piece](#) which was also published in the Cambodia Daily. LICADHO also produced two anti-LANGO songs, both of which became vibrant features of the campaign.

LICADHO's publications joined the chorus of national and [international criticism](#) against the law, with statements and analyses from organisations such as [Amnesty International](#), [Human Rights Watch](#) and [Civil Rights Defenders](#), as well as an [opinion piece](#) from the US



Police block an anti-LANGO march through Phnom Penh, July 2015.

Ambassador to Cambodia. The “Say No! Union, Association and NGO Laws” campaign was also covered by various international media outlets, including the [Guardian](#) and the [Bangkok Post](#).

TAKING THE CAMPAIGN GLOBAL

LICADHO’s lobbying efforts to halt repressive laws were not limited to Cambodia. In April, LICADHO met Danish civil society organisations (Clean Clothes Campaign, Danish labour association, DanMission, Save the Children, Fair Trade DK) to highlight the impact of LANGO and other harmful legislation, including the Trade Union Law and Telecommunications Law, on Cambodian civil society and threatening Cambodia’s newfound freedoms. LICADHO representatives also met the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the threat to Cambodia’s civil society.

Staying in Scandinavia, LICADHO also met the clothing retailer H&M in Sweden to discuss the impact of repressive laws, focusing on LANGO and the Trade Union Law. Shortly after the meeting, the company – which is the second-largest fashion retailer in the world and sources from 58 factories in Cambodia as of 2014 – announced a new program that seeks to improve pay in the factories from which it sources.

In December, LICADHO presented on LANGO to delegates from civil society and Members of the European Parliament at the 17th EU NGO Human Rights Forum. The presentation on LANGO was a success, generating follow-up discussion and interest from participants. The Forum provided LICADHO with insight and experience from overseas civil society subjected to the growing global trend of repressive legislation targeting NGOs, which LICADHO was able to share with partners.

Despite a hard-fought and far-reaching campaign, supported by virtually every spectrum of civil society, LANGO was passed by the National Assembly on July 13. Undeterred, groups will continue to defend Cambodia’s democratic space and continue the struggle against other repressive laws.



Cambodia's youth sing and dance against LANGO, July 2015.

In 2015, 994 members of Child Protection Groups (CPGs) partnered with LICADHO's Child Rights Office (CRO) to organize 14 community advocacy presentations, 15 public forums, six interactive theatre performances and four marches. Altogether, 7,728 people (4,191 female, 3,537 male) participated in these events. For the first time ever, activities for International Children's Day (June 1) and World Day Against Child Labour (June 12) were organized in all four of the CRO's target areas: Kandal/Phnom Penh, Preah Sihanouk, Koh Kong, and Siem Reap.

ACTIVISM OF YOUTH CPGs

For youth CPGs, 2015 was the year when a core group of members emerged as passionate child and human rights advocates in their own right.

In 2015 youth CPGs significantly increased their advocacy activities related to child and human rights. In addition to International Children's Day and the World Day Against Child Labour, youth CPGs organized child rights advocacy events in urban and rural communities for International Women's Day (March 8), Labour Day (May 1) and International Youth Day (August 12).

Youth CPGs based in Phnom Penh also participated in a

broad range of civil society campaigns and activities. For example, on May 13-17, four activist youths from Phnom Penh joined an exposure visit to Prey Lang forest, co-organized by the Cambodian Youth Network. Prey Lang is one of the last remaining lowland evergreen woodlands in Southeast Asia and has been the subject of an ongoing civil society campaign to end the devastating deforestation occurring within its boundaries.

CHILD PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

In total, 12 commune/sangkat councils allowed 30 children from 12 child CPG groups to participate in their meetings. During these council meetings, local authorities and children discussed issues affecting their communities. By attending these meetings the children gained valuable insights into the commune administration process. More importantly, however, the children were able to raise their own concerns and discuss issues such as school dropouts, child labour and other difficulties poor rural families face in sending their children to school in the city. Participating in commune councils offered child CPGs the chance to show local authorities that they have common interests and that children can offer valuable insights into their community.

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LICADHO ADMINISTRATION

At the end of December 2015, LICADHO employed 139 staff, including eight interns (four women, four men), six disabled staff (four women, two men), six foreign consultants (two women, four men) and one female special agreement staff. LICADHO also recruited nine new staff over the period (four women, one man).

During the year, 12 staff members (two women and ten men) resigned. Reasons for leaving varied from new employment to contract termination. Meanwhile, 14 staff members were promoted or transferred to another office.

COMMUNICATION AND MEETINGS

In 2015, LICADHO received a total of 458 clients to its Phnom Penh office and 1,995 clients and visitors to its 13 provincial offices. LICADHO also dispatched 1,285 letters to various institutions, including letters of interventions and invitations to events – 125 from Phnom Penh. In return, LICADHO received 1,307 letters from government authorities, partner NGOs, and other correspondents, including 271 to the Phnom Penh office.

INTERNAL MEETINGS

- The Management Team met at least once a month to discuss and solve internal issues such as staff reflection and staff care, staff recruitment and promotion, post-LANGO strategy, reviews of internal policies, and how best to implement recommendations from this year's organisational evaluation.
- Provincial coordinators convened in Phnom Penh for 1-2 days four times over the year to discuss key issues, submit reports obtain funds.
- Provincial coordinators, Phnom Penh coordinators, supervisors and deputy directors met twice to discuss and review implementation of LICADHO's new strategic plan and recommendations of the organisational evaluation.
- All Phnom Penh staff participated in meetings to discuss strategy for politically sensitive issues, including the two-year anniversary of the Veng Sreng violence, the campaign to Free the 19, the anti-LANGO campaign and International Human Rights Day.
- All staff participated in the annual meeting to elect staff representatives, build relationships and inaugurate the new Ratanakiri office on March 30-April 4, 2015.
- All provincial Coordinators and senior staff participated in a reflection meeting following the annual meeting.

EVENT ORGANISING AND FACILITIES

Event Organizing

In 2015, the Administration and Human Resource Office co-organized events in cooperation with other project offices – including food, water and care packages – including:

- The campaign to Free the 19 at CC2 and CC1
- International Children's Rights Day
- International Labour Day
- The Day Against Child Labour
- Protests and marches against LANGO
- International Human Rights Day

INSURANCE AND EQUIPMENT

- Five cars, 53 motorcycles and 128 staff members are fully insured.
- LICADHO purchased 20 desks, 32 cabinets, 82 chairs, 42 sets of computer and 16 printers during the year for its Phnom Penh and provincial offices.
- 14 smartphones were distributed to LICADHO staff and community partners.

Impacts

- All staff members were satisfied with the facilities provided. The office was repaired throughout the year, including reorganising the electricity system, fixing five broken air conditioners, and maintaining vehicles.
- With support from ADM & HR, other office staff celebrated and conducted events and activities throughout the year.
- Clients who accessed LICADHO received the assistance they required and were satisfied with the responsive service.

Challenges

- LICADHO had insufficient cars for missions to the provinces.
- It proved difficult to recruit senior staff – for example, Deputy Director of monitoring office, Deputy Director of Administration and Human Resource, Director, Advocacy Coordinator and Medical Coordinator – as LICADHO's salary scale is lower than the market average. However, Advocacy and Medical Coordinators were recruited.

APPENDIX 1: LICADHO PUBLICATIONS

JANUARY 2015

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Veng Sreng Anniversary: Still no Justice for the Dead, Missing and Injured

January 1, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=368>

Audio Book: “Good Wives”: Four Women Land Activists Tell Their Stories

January 8, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/media/index.php?id=25&c=1>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Rights at a Price: Life Inside Cambodia’s Prisons

January 20, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=369>

Report: Rights at a Price: Life Inside Cambodia’s Prisons

January 20, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports.php?perm=202>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Civil Society Groups Condemn the Ongoing Detention of 11 Activists

January 26, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=370>

Article: Spotlight on the 19: Ly Seav Minh

January 28, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/articles/20150128/143/index.html>

FEBRUARY 2015

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Civil Society Organizations Call on the Government and Political Parties to Respect Freedom of Expression

February 5, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=371>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Childhood Behind Bars - Growing up in a Cambodian Prison – Dara’s Story

February 15, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=372>

Report: Rights at a Price: Childhood Behind Bars - Growing up in a Cambodian Prison – Dara’s Story

February 15, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports.php?perm=203>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Civil Society Groups Condemn Use of Visa Denial to Curb Activism

February 17, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=373>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Renewed Surge in Land Disputes Must be Addressed Not Denied

February 19, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=374>

Article: Spotlight on The 19: The Freedom Park “Insurrectionists”

February 24, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/articles/20150224/144/index.html>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Withdraw Armed Forces and Court Officials from Political Party Ranks to Strengthen Rule of Law and Democracy in Cambodia

February 26, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=376>

MARCH 2015

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Release of Imprisoned Mothers and Pregnant Women Will Provide Some Relief but Does Not Address Underlying Issues.

March 2, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=375>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Report Documents Cambodian Government's ongoing Failure to Implement ICCPR

March 3, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=377>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): LICADHO Cancels its Long-Time International Women's Day Activities in Prisons due to Government Restrictions

March 5, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=378>

Article: Cambodian Women on the Front Line: Six Stories of Resistance

March 13, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/articles/20150313/145/index.html>

Report: Shadow Report for the UN Human Rights Committee's Consideration of the Second Report of Cambodia

March 17-18, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports.php?perm=204>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Long-term Solutions Necessary for the Welfare of Children whose Mothers Face Imprisonment

March 18, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=379>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): LICADHO Opens up its Land Concessions Data, Urges Full Transparency from the Government

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=380>

March 30, 2015

MAY 2015

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Cambodia Should Register, Not Return, Vietnamese Asylum Seekers

May 1, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=381>

Photo Album: Peaceful 2015 International Labour Day Celebrations in Phnom Penh

May 5, 2015

http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/album/view_photo.php?cat=67

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Cambodia: Withdraw Proposed Association Law and Make Legislative Drafting Process Transparent

May 11, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=382>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Going Offline? The Threat to Cambodia's Newfound Internet Freedoms

May 17, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=383>

Report: Going Offline? The Threat to Cambodia's Newfound Internet Freedoms

May 17, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports.php?perm=205>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Mothers Behind Bars: The Impact of Detention on Women and their Children

May 26, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=384>

Report: Mothers Behind Bars: The Impact of Detention on Women and their Children

May 26, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports.php?perm=206>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): LICADHO Urges Government to Support Child Rights and to Protect Youth in Prisons

May 31, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=385>

JUNE 2015

Video: The Bird of First June

June 1, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/video.php?perm=59>

Briefing Paper: New Draft Law on Associations and NGOs Reaffirms Culture of Control

June 11, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports.php?perm=207>

Audio Book: Going Offline? The Threat to Cambodia's Newfound Internet Freedoms

June 11, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/media/index.php?id=26&c=1>

Article: World Day Against Child Labour: The Plight of Child Labourers in Cambodian Brick Factories

June 12, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/articles/20150612/146/index.html>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): On Stony Ground: A Look into Social Land Concessions

June 24, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=386>

Report: On Stony Ground: A Look into Social Land Concessions

June 24, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports.php?perm=208>

Video: On Stony Ground: The Struggle to Survive in a Cambodian Social Land Concession

June 24, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/video.php?perm=60>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): LICADHO Calls for Restoration of Open Access to Companies Register

June 25, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=387>

Opinion piece: Lets see the "NGO Law" for what it is: a muzzle on dissenting voices

June 25, 2015

http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/collection/31/lango_opinion_piece

Livestream: March Against Repressive Laws

June 29, 2015

http://stream.licadho-cambodia.org/march_against_repressive_laws/

JULY 2015

Photo Album: Cambodian Civil Society Intensifies Public Campaign Against Repressive Laws

July 2, 2015

http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/album/view_photo.php?cat=68

Video: Say No! We Don't Need These Laws

July 4, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/video.php?perm=61>

Livestream: #LANGO: The Last 72 Hours

July 7, 2015

http://stream.licadho-cambodia.org/lango_last_72_hours/

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Civil Society Calls On Senate to Reject LANGO

July 14, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=388>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): LICADHO condemns the conviction and sentencing of 11 CNRP officials and supporters

July 21, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=389>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): ADHOC and LICADHO Urge Cambodian Constitutional Council to Reject Unconstitutional LANGO

July 30, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=390>

AUGUST 2015

Opinion piece: Finding justice for women, children victims of sex crime

August 12, 2015

http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/collection/32/child_rape_opinion

SEPTEMBER 2015

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): ADHOC, CLEC and LICADHO Call for the Immediate Release of 17 Activists and Observers in Koh Kong

September 2, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=391>

OCTOBER 2015

October 2015

Photo Album: Communities from Across Cambodia Celebrate World Habitat Day in Phnom Penh

October 5, 2015

http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/album/view_photo.php?cat=69

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Civil Society Condemns Violence Against Cambodian Opposition MPs)

October 27, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=392>

NOVEMBER 2015

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): CSOs call for an End to Impunity in Cambodia on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists.

November 2, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=393>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): LICADHO Calls for Immediate Closure of Prey Speu Center Following Two Deaths

November 3, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=394>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Getting Away With It: The Treatment of Rape in Cambodia's Justice System

November 29, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=395>

Report: Getting Away With It: The Treatment of Rape in Cambodia's Justice System

November 29, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports.php?perm=210>

Video: The Last Day of Lang Reng

November 20, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/video.php?perm=62>

DECEMBER 2015

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): Thousands Set to Celebrate International Human Rights Day Across the Country

December 4, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=396>

Media Statement (and Audio Clip in Khmer): LICADHO Cancels IHRD Prison Activities for the First Time in 20 Years Due to Prohibitive Restrictions

December 6, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=397>

Livestream: Groups Across Cambodia Celebrate International Human Rights Day 2015

December 9, 2015

http://stream.licadho-cambodia.org/human_rights_day_2015/

Photo Album: Thousands Demand Justice for Human Rights Day Celebrations

December 17, 2015

http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/album/view_photo.php?cat=70

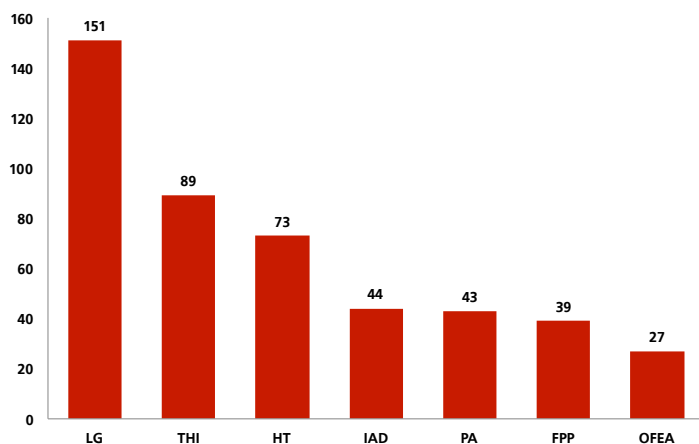
Report: Attacks and Threats Against Human Rights Defenders 2013-2014

December 9, 2015

<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports.php?perm=211>

APPENDIX 2: MONITORING PROJECT STATISTICS

Most common violations investigated by the Human Rights Monitoring Project (Jan. to Dec. 2015)



- LG: Land Grabbing
- THI: Threats, Harassment, and Intimidation
- HT: Human Trafficking
- FPP: Failure To Prosecute / Protect / Provide Service
- PA: Physical Assault
- IAD: Illegal Arrest, Detention
- OFEA: Obstruction to Freedom of Expression / Assembly

Land grabbing (LG) and forced eviction (FE) cases newly investigated by LICADHO in 2015

(including all cases featuring state-involvement and affecting multiple families)

	LG & FE Cases	Families Affected	Families Evicted	Cases Involving Land Concession	Cases Involving Military
B. MEANCHEY	11	617	0	0	1
BATTAMBANG	3	334	0	0	2
K. CHAM	3	730	0	0	0
K. CHHNANG	9	1,683	321	0	1
K. SPEU	10	764	395	8	4
K. THOM	11	1,292	0	5	3
KAMPOT	6	825	68	1	3
KOH KONG	2	20	18	1	1
PHNOM PENH	2	59	11	0	1
PURSAT	5	284	0	1	2
RATANAKIRI	6	1,177	0	3	0
SIEM REAP	6	534	0	1	1
SIHANOUKVILLE	6	281	149	0	0
SVAY RIENG	7	170	0	2	0
KANDAL	2	112	0	0	1
TAKEO	1	50	0	0	0
TBONG KHMUM	7	1,647	0	1	2
TOTAL	97	10,579	962	23	22

Challenges & Lessons Learned

Many victims of human rights violations are afraid to file complaints to the courts as they face threats or intimidations from the perpetrators, and as powerful interests consistently interfere in the judicial process. This is particularly so when cases of human rights violations are brought against companies or individuals with political connections to the ruling party. Conversely, well-connected perpetrators or state parties can use the court system to put pressure on affected communities or threaten HRDs.

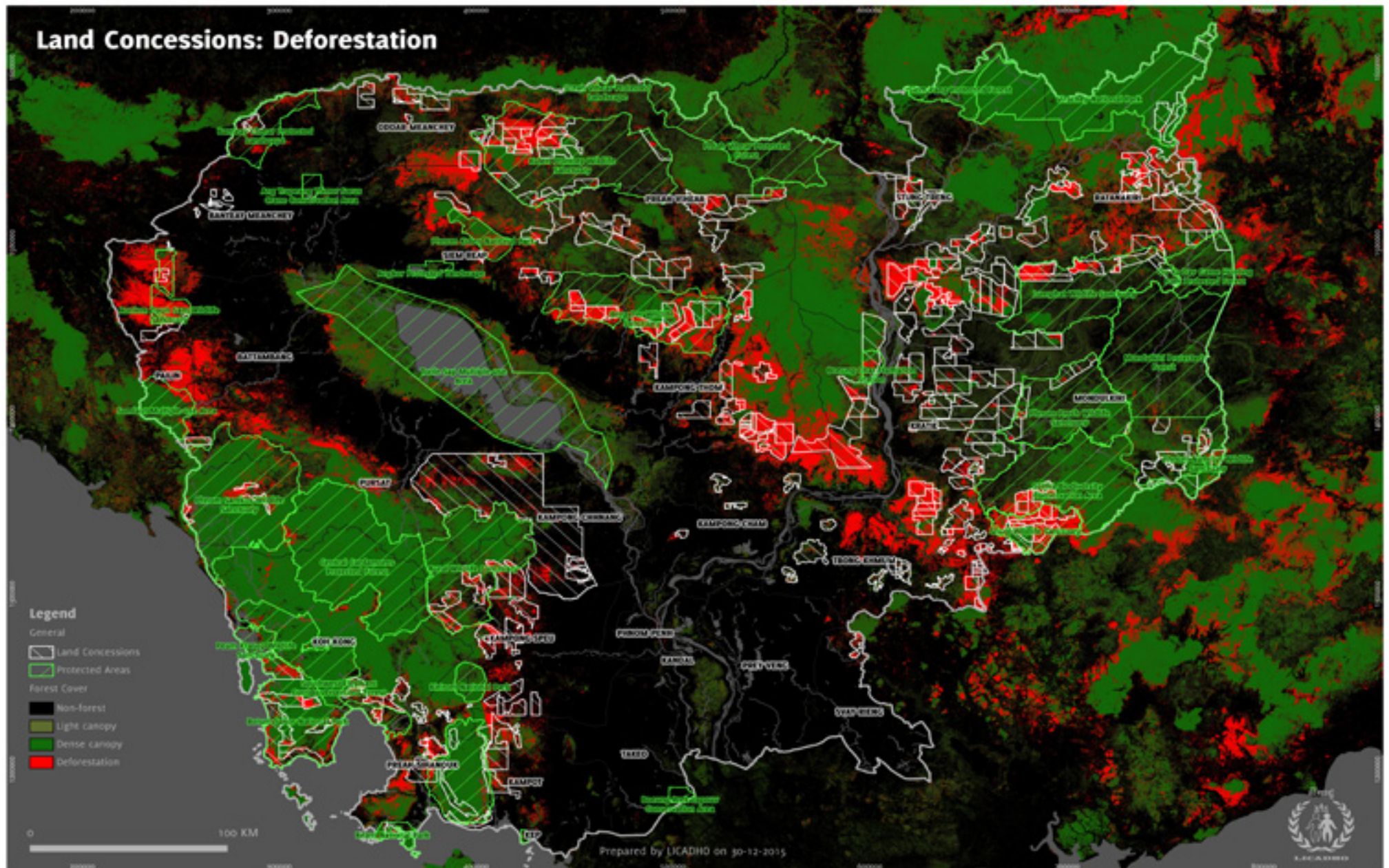
Disproportionate police and security guard deployments regularly blocked peaceful demonstrations throughout the anti-LANGO campaign. During 2015 there has also been a dramatic upturn in politically motivated convictions, arrests and detentions. Between July 21 and August 20, 21 critics of the government have been sentenced or detained by the authorities.

Monitors often meet with resistance rather than cooperation from authorities at all stages of the investigations, particularly politically-sensitive cases relating to land grabbing, forced evictions and political prisoners. Authorities continue to criticize LICADHO's support of communities who protest against such violations, and the government continues to criticize LICADHO's support to those subject to incarceration for political motives. LICADHO will nevertheless continue to offer such support.

In the past years, a pro-government team has emerged which protests against demonstrations by affected communities who show support to victims of human rights abuses. This group is hired to hold anti-demonstration actions and criticize actions of NGOs, defense lawyers, and supporters of victims of human rights abuses.

LICADHO found it increasingly difficult to communicate with victims of human trafficking particularly in countries such as China, Malaysia, and Thailand due to the lack of cooperation between Cambodian embassies and the relevant host country. Additionally, the agencies involved in the recruitment and transport of trafficked Cambodians refuse to cooperate, adding further barriers to contacting the victims involved.

LICADHO Map - Land Concessions: Deforestation



Status of human rights monitoring cases investigated in 2015

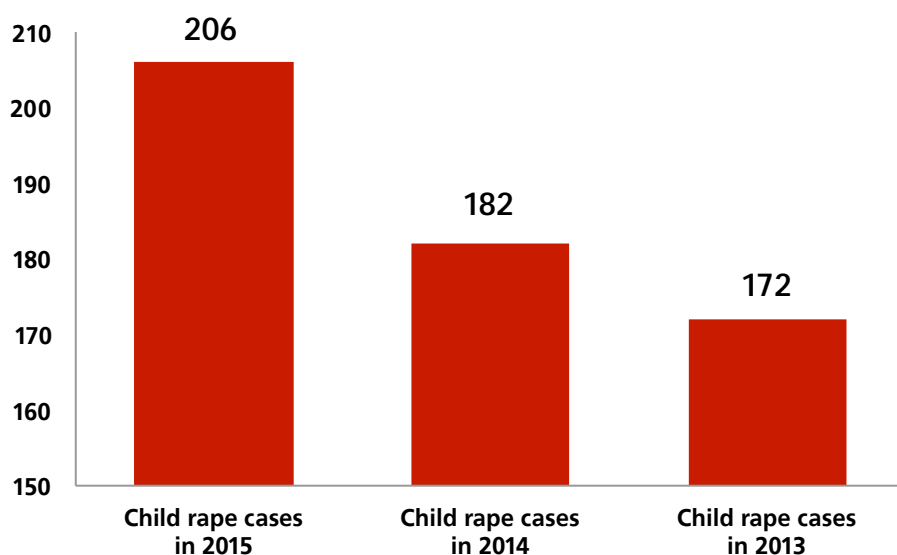
Case type	Total cases	Cases pending				Cases resolved			Case unresolved
		Sent to court	Charged by prosecutor	Authorities	Land commission	Court	Authorities	Land commission	
Killing	14	4	6	4	0	0	0	0	0
Attempted killing	4	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Mob killing	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Attempted mob killing	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Death threat	5	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	0
Torture	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Physical assault	27	11	3	6	0	0	7	0	0
Threats or intimidation	23	5	9	7	0	1	1	0	0
Abduction	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Illegal arrest/detention	27	12	6	2	0	2	4	0	1
Trafficking - labour	40	0	7	18	0	0	15	0	0
Trafficking - sexual	24	0	0	19	0	0	5	0	0
OFEA*	9	1	0	5	0	1	2	0	0
DAP**	9	1	0	5	0	1	2	0	0
Land grabbing	138	13	6	99	4	1	13	1	2
Forced eviction	4	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Failure to prosecute etc	13	2	4	2	0	0	5	0	0
Special case	12	2	1	6	0	0	2	0	1
Signboard interference	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	361	56	49	177	4	7	63	1	4

*OFEA Obstruction to freedom of expression/assembly

**DAP Destruction/illegal appropriation of property

APPENDIX 3: CHILDREN'S & WOMEN'S RIGHTS STATISTICS

Child rape/attempted rape cases investigated by LICADHO in 2015 (compared to 2014 and 2013)



Total number of rape cases & age of victims, investigated by LICADHO's Women's and Children's Rights Office in 2015

A total of 279 new cases documented

In 74% of rape cases victims were children under 18

In 30% of rape cases victims were children under 12

In 10% of rape cases victims are persons with disabilities

5 cases of rape killings

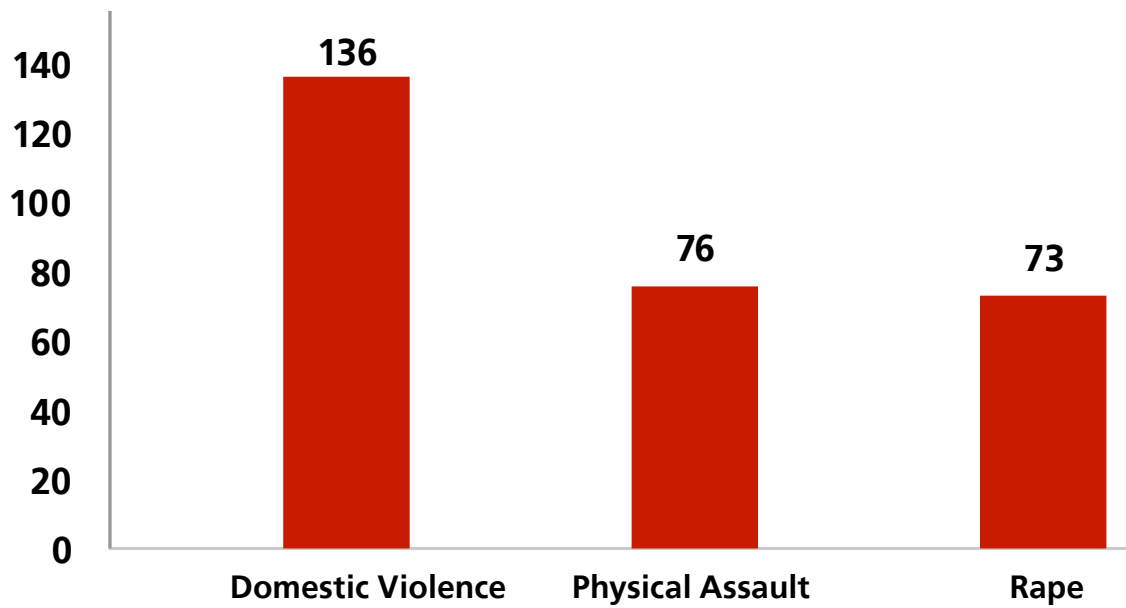
Challenges & Lessons Learned

The Cambodian justice system is complex and beset by corruption. By themselves, victims of violence find it very difficult to navigate and frequently come under pressure to drop criminal complaints and accept financial compensation. For this reason it is very important for victims to have good legal representation. LICADHO has a small legal team that covers all human rights and women's and children's rights cases, therefore it is only able to provide legal representation in a few women's and children's rights cases each year. Moreover, some partner organisations have reduced or cut the legal support they are able to provide. LICADHO will continue to seek suitable legal representation for clients most in need but the situation is likely to remain challenging.

It remains a significant challenge in women's rights cases that victims of domestic and sexual violence rely on informal methods of resolving cases. These informal methods are of very limited effect.

In rape cases too, prosecutions are rare and the majority of cases are brought to an end when financial compensation is paid by the perpetrator to the victim. Sometimes this payment is the outcome of a civil complaint by the victim but in many cases it is informally negotiated by an authority figure such as a police officer. For the women concerned, accepting such payments should be regarded as a rational decision as the police and courts remain extremely unsympathetic to rape victims and the likelihood of achieving a prosecution is slim. LICADHO must respect the women's choice in such cases but this makes it very difficult to achieve real justice or to move towards a situation in which there is respect for the rule of law.

Most common violations investigated by the Women’s Rights Monitoring Project in 2015



Children’s rights cases opened in 2015 pending with authorities

Case	Police	Suspect escaped	In court process			Total
			Suspect arrested	Suspect released on bail	No action	
Rape/ Attempted Rape	5	35	145	4	6	195
Indecent Assault	0	1	4	0	3	8
Killing	0	0	4	0	1	5
Attempted Killing	0	1	1	0	0	2
Sex Trafficking	1	0	2	0	0	3
Trafficking by Labor	1	2	0	0	0	3
Trafficking by Adoption	1	0	0	0	0	1
Physical Assault	1	1	1	0	0	3
Child Domestic Violence	1	1	3	0	0	5
Child Domestic Work	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special Case	2	1	1	0	0	4
Total	12	42	161	4	10	229

Women's rights cases opened in 2015 pending with authorities

Type	Police	Suspect escaped	In Court Process			Total
			Suspect arrested	Under investigation	Suspect released on bail	
Domestic violence	5	14	45	54	1	119
Rape	1	7	44	13	1	66
Indecent assault	1	1	4	0	0	6
Acid attack	0	0	1	0	0	1
Trafficking - sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	7	22	94	67	2	192

Children's rights campaigns and awareness-raising activities (Jan. to Dec. 2015)

Type of campaign	Topics covered	Participants
8 awareness raising activities in three provinces and Phnom Penh	- Child rights and child labor - UNCRC and ILO convention - Worst forms of child labour, Child work/light work	1,488
11 public forums in three provinces and Phnom Penh	- Child labour in fishing - Child domestic worker - Child labour in brick factories	1,075
9 interactive theatre performances in three provinces and Phnom Penh	- Child labour in fishing - Child domestic worker - Child labour in brick factories	5,453
2 campaigns in Siem Reap	Tree planting campaign on International Youth Day	315
4 marches in three provinces and Phnom Penh	International Children's Day and World Day Against Child Labour	2,940
Total participants		11,371

APPENDIX 4: PRISON MONITORING STATISTICS

Political prisoner list (as of February 26, 2016)

Name	Position/Role	Date Current Imprisonment Began	Date of Conviction	Prison Sentence	Prison
Meach Sovannara	CNRP national election candidate for Banteay Meanchey	July 21, 2015	July 21, 2015	20 years imprisonment	CC1
Oeur Narith	CNRP Official of Public Affairs Department	July 21, 2015	July 21, 2015	20 years imprisonment	CC1
Khin Chamreun	Chief of Phnom Penh's CNRP Youths Movement	July 21, 2015	July 21, 2015	20 years imprisonment	CC1
Sum Puthy	CNRP Chbar Ampov district council member	July 21, 2015	July 21, 2015	7 years imprisonment	CC1
Neang Sokhun	CNRP Chbar Ampov district youth leader	July 21, 2015	July 21, 2015	7 years imprisonment	CC1
San Kimheng	CNRP Tuol Kork district youth leader	July 21, 2015	July 21, 2015	7 years imprisonment	CC1
Tep Narin	CNRP Youth Member	July 21, 2015	July 21, 2015	7 years imprisonment	CC1
San Seihak	CNRP Youth Member	July 21, 2015	July 21, 2015	7 years imprisonment	CC1
An Batham	CNRP Youth Member	July 21, 2015	July 21, 2015	7 years imprisonment	CC1
Ouk Pich Samnang	CNRP Supporter	July 21, 2015	Case 1: 21-Jul-15; Case 2: 10-Sep-15	Case 1: 7 years imprisonment Case 2: 2 years imprisonment	CC1
Ke Khim	CNRP Supporter	July 21, 2015	July 21, 2015	7 years imprisonment	CC1
Dav Tep	Monk	August 3, 2015	pre-trial detention	N/A	CC1
Chea Vanda	Monk	August 3, 2015	pre-trial detention	N/A	CC1
Yun Kimhour	CNRP activist	August 5, 2015	pre-trial detention	N/A	CC1
Roeun Chetra	CNRP activist	August 5, 2015	pre-trial detention	N/A	CC1
Yea Thong	CNRP activist	August 5, 2015	pre-trial detention	N/A	CC1
Hong Sok Hour	Sam Rainsy Party Senator	August 16, 2015	on trial	N/A	CC1
Try Sovikea	Mother Nature activist	August 17, 2015	pre-trial detention	N/A	Koh Kong
Sun Mala	Mother Nature activist	August 17, 2015	pre-trial detention	N/A	Koh Kong
Sim Somnang	Mother Nature activist	August 17, 2015	pre-trial detention	N/A	Koh Kong
Kong Raya	Cambodia Student Network president	August 22, 2015	on trial	N/A	CC1
Vein Vorn	CPP Commune Councilor for Chumnoab Commune	October 7, 2015	on trial	N/A	Koh Kong
Norng Sarith	CNRP Commune Councilor for Bavet Commune	November 20, 2015	pre-trial detention	N/A	Svay Rieng
Sok Sam Ean	CNRP Supporter	November 20, 2015	pre-trial detention	N/A	Svay Rieng

Challenges & Lessons Learned

LICADHO's prison monitoring continues to be subject to increasing restrictions which are inconsistently applied throughout the country. LICADHO is not always able to interview detainees in full confidentiality and LICADHO cannot make unannounced visits to places of detention.

In 2015, LICADHO had to cancel its longtime International Women's Day (IWD) and International Human Rights Day (IHRD) activities in Cambodian prisons this year due to government restrictions. During 2014, the government imposed increasing restrictions on LICADHO's special prison activities and these restrictions reached an apex in 2015 when the government restricted all activities except for the delivery of care packages to the prison, where the packages would then allegedly be distributed by prison authorities. Although LICADHO continued its dialogue with prison and ministry officials and on International Children's Day the government once again allowed LICADHO to conduct games and other activities with imprisoned youth, by IHRD restrictions were once more in place.

LICADHO's prison work faces additional challenges during times of political crisis. The pervasiveness of political interference in the justice sector continued throughout 2015 as political negotiations continued to parallel criminal proceedings against opposition members and supporters. The government also continued using imprisonment to quash dissent from environmental activists. Access to political prisoners in the future remains a serious concern and LICADHO will continue to maintain its dialogue with prison officials as well as national and international organizations to ensure that the rights and well-being of political prisoners are respected.

APPENDIX 5: LEGAL STATISTICS

New cases opened (Jan. to Dec. 2015)

New case type	No. of cases	Male clients	Female clients	Total clients	Provincial court	Appeal court	Supreme court
Land grabbing	20	31	18	49	20	0	0
Human rights defender	4	8	10	18	3	0	1
Domestic violence	2	0	2	2	1	0	1
Special case	4	3	3	6	4	0	0
Rape	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
Total	31	42	34	76	29	0	2

Cases closed in favour of clients in 2015

Case type	Number of cases	Male clients	Female clients	Total	Outcomes
Land grabbing	4	3	8	11	LICADHO lawyers succeeded in persuading the courts to drop charges in three cases. In one case, after LICADHO lawyers accompanied clients to interview, the investigating judge filed the case without process meaning LICADHO clients faced no charges.
Human rights defender	2	1	10	11	PP municipal court and appeal court handed down sentences ranging from 6 months to one year. The clients were in prison for approximately five months. While waiting for an appeal to the Supreme Court the King granted a royal pardon to all 11 clients and they were released.
Special case	3	1	3	4	LICADHO lawyers succeeded in securing life imprisonment for a perpetrator of an acid attack against a LICADHO client, and successfully claimed 80 million riels in compensation. One client accepted a judgment of a suspended sentence, avoiding serving time in prison despite conviction.
Total	9	5	21	26	N/A

Challenges & Lessons Learned

Lawyers who defend community representatives, HRDs or members of opposition parties frequently face intimidation and pressure from government lawyers and other powerful parties or institutions. The HRLP will risk assess each case and identify the level of risk mitigation needed to protect both clients and lawyers. This assessment should be flexible and subject to review during the course of legal cases. If there is a higher profile case with greater risk it should be standard practice to only work in team and only take LICADHO transport.

Court processes often violate rule of law: court officials are often biased in favor of well-connected and powerful businessmen or ruling party officials; prosecutors frequently bring charges without sufficient legal grounds and mistakes; and negligence by police or court officials can lead to wrongful detention of HRDs and activists. Exculpatory evidence, witness testimonies and other statements brought forward by LICADHO lawyers are frequently ignored. LICADHO lawyers will continue to persevere despite the attitude of the courts, which will involve maintaining good communication and ensuring lawyers don't respond with a negative attitude, taking the opposite stance to negative behavior.

Well-connected companies or state actors involved in land grabbing cases increasingly resort to influencing officials to take action on bogus criminal cases, often relating to violence, against land activists. This new strategy distracts NGOs, the public and international communities from real land grabbing issues, deflecting attention to a groundless court case.

Throughout these challenges, LICADHO's HRLP continues to push court officials and authorities to respect rule of law while cooperating with other NGOs and coordinating with the UN, the international community, and other stakeholders to encourage just and equitable practices within the judicial system.

APPENDIX 6: SOCIAL WORK & MEDICAL PROJECT STATISTICS

Social work assistance by key case type in 2015

Case type	Number of clients (individuals)
Rape (victims and family members)	117
Land grabbing	4,938
Victims of human trafficking	188
Illegal arrest	90
Domestic violence	41
Vulnerable children (and family members)	770

Food and material assistance to communities affected by land grabbing in 2015

No.	Community/Location	Province	Number of Families
1	Ou Chum	Ratanakiri	70
2	Lum Phat	Ratanakiri	80
3	Bor Keo	Ratanakiri	73
4	Andong Meas	Ratanakiri	73
5	Boeung Kak	Phnom Penh	11
6	Kampong Trach	Kampot	26
7	Koh Kralor	Battambang	2
8	Thmar Bouk	Banteay Meanchey	62
9	Romeas Hek + Romdol	Svay Rieng	37
10	Lor Peang	Kampong Chhnang	8
11	Bouk	Siem Reap	56
12	Svay Leu	Siem Reap	21
13	Ou Damrei	Kampong Som	36
14	Ou Tres	Kampong Som	42
15	Prey Nub	Kampong Som	2
16	Kiri Sakor	Koh Kong	14
17	Phnom Sroch	Kampong Speu	61
18	Ou Ral	Kampong Speu	70
19	Thmar Da (Veal Veng)	Pursat	22
20	Ansor Kdam	Pursat	23
21	Phnom Bat	Kandal	31
22	Borei Keila	Phnom Penh	11
23	Boeung Pram (Bor Vil)	Battambang	14
24	Kshoem	Kratie	21
Total			866

Challenges & Lessons Learned

A continuing challenge faced by the Social Work Project is that LICADHO does not have the means to provide long-term support for victims of human rights violations. Many families, particularly those exposed to land grabbing, see their livelihood destroyed as a result of human rights violations. The sheer number of such victims is simply beyond LICADHO's capacity to address. The SWP's limited resources and focus on providing short-term emergency assistance to selected people and communities means that unfortunately the SWP often cannot provide further assistance to families who genuinely require long-term support.

The SWP takes efforts both before and after the provision of assistance, to explain the short-term nature of the assistance they provide. Where possible the SWP will refer the victims to other NGO's or groups that are able to provide ongoing assistance. Realizing that many victims of human rights abuses will face long-term challenges, the SWP also piloted income generation and livelihood support schemes instead of emergency food supplies, enabling the clients to support themselves. If the approach proves to be successful, LICADHO will be able to provide a broader range of social support services responding to different needs.

Local authorities sometimes prevent LICADHO's SWP from providing assistance to communities in need, claiming that LICADHO lacked authorization from higher authorities, who in turn claim they were unable or unwilling to grant permission. In some cases, state security forces were present at distribution points, or demanded details of the identities of distributors and distributed materials until community leaders, supported by LICADHO, are able to demonstrate a genuine need for assistance.

Medical consultations for members of communities affected by land grabbing/evictions

Community/province	Adult patients		Child patients		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Oudong/Kandal	229	560	83	93	965
Phnom Bath/Kandal	316	839	142	200	1497
Tuol Sambo/Kandal	275	530	85	149	1039
Anchan/Phnom Penh	212	509	118	137	976
Boeng Kak Lake/Phnom Penh	172	183	3	4	362
Borei Keyla/Phnom Penh	68	125	7	5	205
Chhikor/Koh Kong	9	14	1	0	24
Botom Sakor/Koh Kong	100	59	0	1	160
Khva/Phnom Penh	22	19	0	0	41
Lor Peang/Kampong Chhnang	56	86	1	0	143
Borvel/Battambang	83	27	0	0	110
Thmorda/Pursat	13	29	0	0	42
Total	1,555	2,980	440	589	5,564

Prison visits and medical consultations for prisoners and prison guards

Prison	Consultations for prisoners		Consultations for guards		Total consultations	Prison visits
	Men	Women	Men	Women		
Takhmao	152	40	5	0	197	9
PJ	159	34	13	0	206	6
Takeo	557	54	18	1	630	7
Koh Kong	416	89	11	0	516	7
Kg. Chhnang	556	134	14	11	715	10
Kg. Thom	389	143	42	10	584	8
Kg. Cham	1002	164	46	5	1217	12
Preah Sihanouk	367	116	8	0	491	7
Prey Veng	411	60	4	0	475	8
Pusat	592	42	20	4	658	12
Battambang	538	156	6	0	700	7
Svay Rieng	471	73	4	1	549	8
CC1	802	0	43	0	845	39
CC2	0	301	12	15	328	21
CC3	29	0	2	0	31	2
CC4	177	14	16	3	210	7
Total	6,618	1,420	264	50	8,352	170

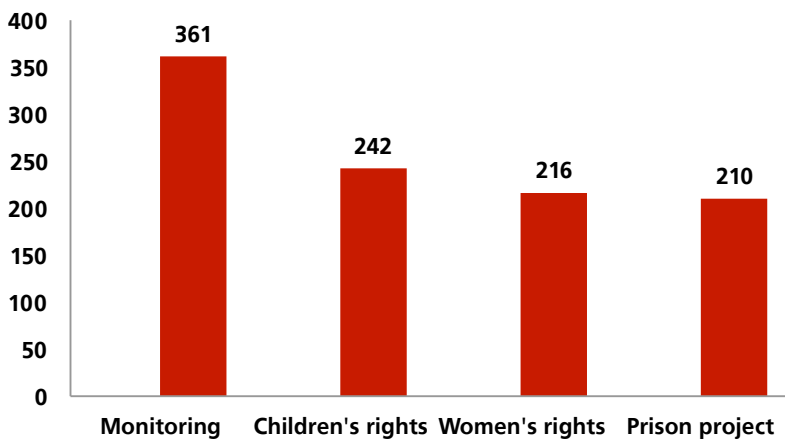
The biggest challenge for the medical team in 2015 has been the restriction of prison access. Beginning primarily in August 2015, LICADHO's medical team has been denied access to a number of prisons.

This raises concerns that many of LICADHO's prisoner patients, including those with serious diseases, will not receive important follow-up consultations and treatments from LICADHO's medical team. Some prisoners have serious on-going medical conditions that require consistent check-ups and regular medication and, sometimes, external visits to hospitals. In prisons that still allow LICADHO's medical team access, the prison directors no longer allow doctors to visit patients directly in their cells as before. This makes it more difficult for doctors to independently assess which prisoners require the most immediate assistance.

While LICADHO continues to seek access to those prisons and prisoners, the medical team have increased their visits to those prisons that continue to allow access. The medical team has also responded by placing greater focus on other aspects of the medical team's activities, such as increasing field visits to impoverished communities affected by land grabbing.

APPENDIX 7: ADVOCACY AND DOCUMENTATION STATISTICS

Cases entered into central database in 2015



LICADHO's online presence

In 2015:

- 5,383,594 hits on LICADHO's website and 242,953 visits;
- 772,344 people reached via LICADHO's Facebook posts;
- 233,921 new views on LICADHO/LICADHO Canada YouTube channel;
- 12,850 total visits to LICADHO's 2015 livestreams;
- People from 146 countries have viewed LICADHO/LICADHO Canada's online videos;
- 90.6% of total views of LICADHO/LICADHO Canada's YouTube channel came from mobile phones and tablets - an increase from 63% in 2014.

Top five countries accessing LICADHO's website:

1. Cambodia
2. United States
3. Hong Kong
4. Great Britain
5. France

2015 represents the first year that the highest number of website visits came from inside Cambodia.

Challenges & Lessons Learned

Advocacy efforts, particularly in relation to public advocacy and promoting grassroots empowerment, will face acute challenges through LANGO. The repressive law will likely be used to threaten the existence and operation of unfavorable grassroots groups, associations and NGO through mandatory registration, criminalization of all activities by unregistered membership organizations, total discretion of the Ministry of Interior (Mol) over registration approval and vaguely defined articles.

The traditional media remains in the hand of the government. Although English language newspapers are free to publish their own content, Khmer language newspapers are strictly monitor, as are Khmer language radio and television stations, inhibiting LICADHO's ability to advocate at the national level.

To combat this, LICADHO advocate heavily through its website and increasingly also through social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. However, repressive laws relating to civic space on the internet – the Telecommunications Law and the Cybercrime Law – could open the doors to further censorship, privacy abuses, and possible service blackouts. The laws could certainly hinder LICADHO's ability to disseminate advocacy materials online through its website and social media channels.

LICADHO's advocacy takes place within government structures and national institutions fully controlled by the ruling party. It remains highly challenging to determine the medium and long-term impact of advocacy in such a volatile, corrupt and unpredictable social, political and economic environment.

The LANGO, which was passed in July, places burdensome requirements on informal networks, grassroots groups and social movements and has been widely condemned for its potentially repressive provisions and violation of the right to association. The law criminalises all activities by unregistered membership organizations. Mandatory registration could have a particularly severe impact on the freedom of association of grassroots groups and community based organizations. Although LICADHO, its partners and a great swathe of Cambodian and international civil society campaigned nationally and internationally against the LANGO, the law was passed. These efforts were also undermined by time constraints due to the swift legislative progress of the draft law. Nevertheless, civil society remains united against LANGO and determined to continue defending democratic space.

For most vulnerable Cambodians, the only way to express disapproval, suffering or request for solutions is through community movement and public protest. However, these activities can often put them in serious dangers. Community leaders and activists may be intimidated, assaulted or even arrested. Although violence against protestors was less in 2015 than 2014, security guards were ordered to seize and destroy advocacy materials.

Notable LICADHO appearances in international media in 2015

Date	Source	Title of article	Link
2/2/2015	Reuters	Cambodia's ruling party promotes PM's sons, top allies	http://www.reuters.com/article/cambodia-politics-idUSL4N0VC26620150202
21/2/2015	The Diplomat	Cambodian Land Conflicts Surge	http://thediplomat.com/2015/02/cambodian-land-conflicts-surge/
23/2/2015	El Pais	Arrestado en Camboya un ecologista español (Cambodia arrested a Spanish ecologist)	http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/02/23/actualidad/1424700928_766186.html
25/3/2015	The Diplomat	Cambodia Defends Its Human Rights Record	http://thediplomat.com/2015/03/cambodia-defends-its-human-rights-record/
17/7/2015	The Diplomat	Does Cambodia Really Need a New NGO Law?	http://thediplomat.com/2015/07/does-cambodia-really-need-a-new-ngo-law/
19/7/2015	Süddeutsche Zeitung	Stillhalten und weiterrähen – (Hold still and continue sewing)	http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/kambodscha-stillhalten-und-weiterraeuen-1.2572902?reduced=true
21/7/2015	The Guardian	Cambodian court jails 11 opposition activists for 'insurrection'	http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/21/cambodian-court-jails-11-opposition-activists-for-insurrection
21/7/2015	Al Jazeera	Cambodia jails opposition activists for 'insurrection'	http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/07/cambodia-jails-opposition-activists-insurrection-150721123023451.html
24/7/2015	The Diplomat	New Jailings Expose the Farce of Cambodia's 'Culture of Dialogue'	http://thediplomat.com/2015/07/new-jailings-expose-the-farce-of-cambodias-culture-of-dialogue/
25/11/2015	The Guardian	Mekong: a river rising	http://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2015/nov/26/the-mekong-river-stories-from-the-heart-of-the-climate-crisis-interactive
07/12/2015	Al Jazeera	Cambodian Human Rights Day events canceled amid state crackdown	http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/12/7/cambodian-group-cancels-human-rights-event-amid-state-crackdowns.html
21/12/2015	Channel News Asia	Cambodia police use water cannon to break up textiles strike	http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/cambodia-police-use-water/2366678.html
21/12/2015	Reuters	Cambodia police use water cannon to break up textiles strike	http://www.reuters.com/article/us-cambodia-textiles-idUSKBN0U40SJ20151221

