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*Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association*



# Cambodian Journalism Situation Report 2025

An annual record of reported cases of violations  
against journalists

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

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# I. Executive summary

In 2025, CamboJA documented 61 cases of violations targeting journalists and media outlets in Cambodia. These cases involved journalists working primarily in online media, with social media—particularly Facebook—emerging as a high-risk reporting platform in Cambodia. Women journalists were disproportionately affected in several cases, including incidents involving gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Several journalists experienced multiple violations over time, indicating entrenched patterns of targeting rather than isolated incidents.

Journalists were subjected to physical assaults, psychological abuse, legal action/threats, sexual harassment, discrimination and intimidation. These acts caused physical injury, psychological trauma, engendering a climate of fear and self-censorship among journalists, particularly among women journalists who faced both online and offline sexual harassment.

Authorities frequently used criminal provisions to target journalists, such as incitement, treason, or vague national security allegations, rather than pursuing civil remedies under the Cambodian Press Law. Pre-trial detention and prolonged legal uncertainty were used as tools of intimidation. These patterns are reflected in many cases of journalists being targeted, including in the case of an environmental journalist who has been facing multiple lawsuits and remains under the court supervision.

As a result of sustained pressure, published articles were removed, media licenses revoked. The consequences have been severe: journalists have experienced psychological distress, restrictions on movement, reputational harm, forced relocation, self-censorship, and compelled apologies, all of which have contributed to a profound chilling effect on freedom of expression.

During the reporting period, CamboJA documented the revocation of licenses for five media outlets' by the Ministry of Information. Reporting on sensitive public-interest issues- such as environmental crimes, land disputes, corruption, online scams, politics, economic issues, and the Cambodia-Thailand border conflict – most often triggered violations.

A majority of the violations documented throughout 2025 were allegedly perpetrated by state actors, accounting for approximately 83% of the total violations. The allegedly responsible state actors included local, provincial, and national-level authorities. This consistent pattern highlights an underlying culture of impunity, where violations against journalists are rarely investigated or punished by authorities.

In 2025, CamboJA documented six cases where journalists were arrested, charged and imprisoned as a result of their reporting. Of these, two journalists were sentenced to 14 years<sup>1</sup> in prison, while four others spent between ten days to seven months in detention before being released on bail.

Overall, the report concludes that Cambodia remains far from realizing constitutional and international commitments to uphold press freedom, and that intimidation, criminalization, and regulatory control are increasingly used to silence independent journalism.

Against this background, many journalists refrained from reporting abuses due to fear of retaliation, lack of trust in authorities, or the belief that no meaningful action would follow. Only a small number of cases were formally reported, and even fewer (two cases) resulted in investigations or accountability.

A significant regulatory development in 2025 was the introduction of a new Prakas on journalism qualifications and a new press card requirement by the Ministry of Information, officially aimed at combating “fake news” but raising concerns about further control over the media sector. Criminal prosecution of journalists is becoming more common, despite constitutional guarantees under Article 41 protecting freedom of expression, information, and publication.

“The increasing number of legal accusations against journalists serves as a form of intimidation and a signal of threat against reporters. However, even in the absence of government accountability, reporters persist in their work,” said Nop Vy, CamboJA's Executive Director.

The documented violations contravened Cambodia's Constitution, particularly Articles 38, 43 and 41, which guarantee personal liberty, security, and freedom of expression, freedom of information, publication and assembly. They also breached Cambodia's obligations under international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), notably the rights to freedom of expression, physical security, liberty, justice, and due process.

<sup>1</sup><https://cambojanews.com/two-journalists-sentenced-14-years-over-border-coverage-appeal-filed/>

## II. Introduction

In 2025, Cambodia’s media landscape deteriorated amid a widening disconnect between official government narratives and the lived reality of journalists and independent media. While the Ministry of Information’s second *State of Press Freedom in Cambodia* report claimed improvements in media freedom, this assessment stood in stark contrast to findings by civil society, independent media outlets, and international observers. Cambodia’s ranking in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index fell sharply to 161st out of 180 countries—down from 151st in 2024—reflecting mounting restrictions on journalism, shrinking civic space, and intensifying pressure on freedom of expression<sup>2</sup>.

Throughout the year, state control over the media deepened through regulatory, legal, and administrative measures. The Ministry of Information expanded its oversight role, most notably through a nationwide campaign against so-called “fake news” launched on April 1, 2025. Framed as a safeguard for public trust and social security, the campaign raised serious concerns among civil society and independent media about its potential misuse to silence dissent, curb critical reporting, and legitimize censorship. Public statements by the Minister of Information further reinforced centralized authority over media content and public opinion, signaling heightened surveillance and control of information<sup>3</sup>.

Regulatory changes compounded these concerns. New requirements on journalism qualifications and press card issuance—including certifications of good conduct and declarations of no legal disputes—introduced additional administrative barriers to practicing journalism. Although authorities claimed the measures were aimed at professionalization and primarily targeted new entrants, media organizations warned that they expand discretionary power, undermine media independence, and further weaken an already fragile<sup>4</sup>.

These national developments unfolded against growing international alarm. In October 2025, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution expressing serious concern over Cambodia’s continued deterioration of civil and political rights<sup>5</sup>. The resolution reaffirmed the need to strengthen the rule of law and safeguard democratic institutions, independent media, and judicial independence. It cited judicial harassment, arrests, surveillance, intimidation, and violence targeting journalists, human rights defenders, civil society organizations, and environmental activists.

Importantly, the resolution reflected concerns raised by media organizations and CSOs, including judicial and other forms of pressure against journalists, the revocation of independent media licenses—often justified on grounds of “fake news” or alleged violations of professional standards—and the adoption of the Charter for Professional Journalism without full, meaningful, and inclusive participation of all press associations. It also highlighted the chilling effect of restrictive legislation, such as the Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (LANGO) and amendments to the Law on Political Parties, alongside rising self-censorship, constraints on peaceful assembly, and escalating pressure on independent media.

At the legal and policy level, amendments to the Nationality Law granted authorities broad powers to revoke citizenship on grounds such as treason or collusion with foreign powers—provisions widely viewed as vulnerable to abuse against critics, including journalists and civil society actors with international engagement. Meanwhile, the long-awaited Access to Information (A2I) law remained stalled. Despite repeated calls from media and civil society, the government prioritized drafting a new Press Law, leaving journalists without a clear legal framework to access public information.

Press freedom was further tested during periods of heightened national tension. Border conflicts with Thailand in July and December 2025 led to restrictions on advocacy activities and renewed calls from journalists and media organizations for guarantees of free movement, accreditation, and access for both local and international media. These moments underscored the vital role of independent, on-the-ground reporting in ensuring transparency, public trust, and accountability—especially during security-sensitive situations.

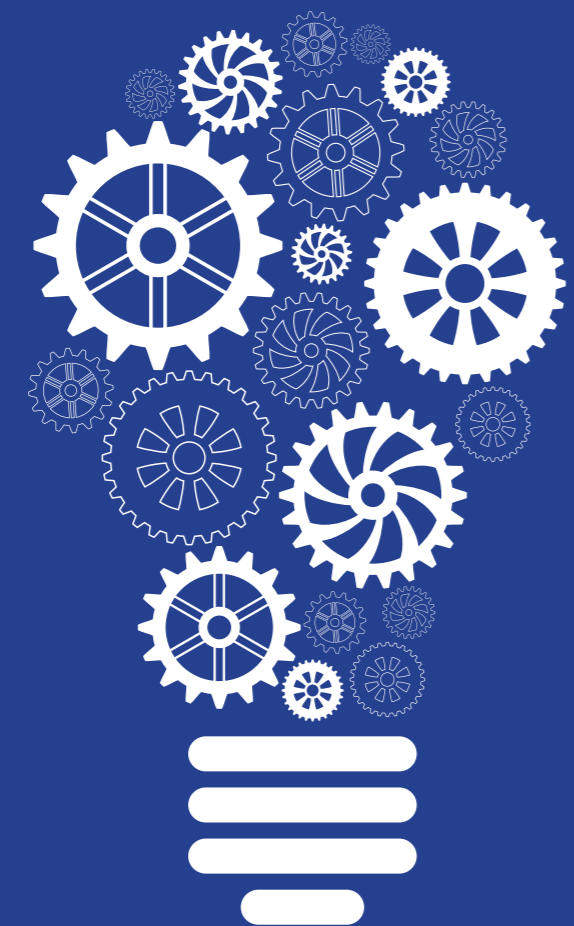
Taken together, developments in 2025 reveal a clear and troubling trajectory toward increased state control over Cambodia’s media environment. While authorities justify these measures as efforts to combat misinformation, enhance professionalism, and preserve social order, their cumulative impact has been to narrow the space for independent journalism. This trend poses serious risks to democratic accountability, public access to information, and the safety, autonomy, and sustainability of media professionals in Cambodia.

<sup>2</sup> <https://rsf.org/en/index>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.information.gov.kh/articles/149710>

<sup>4</sup> <https://cambojanews.com/new-regulations-for-journalists-tighten-grip-on-cambodias-media/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/RES/60/33#:~:text=Sixtieth%20session,discharge%20their%20duties%20in%20accordance>



### III. Methodology

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

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

#### **A human right-based monitoring methodology**

The methodology and data collection in this report is grounded in a human rights-based approach to documenting threats and attacks against the safety of journalists. This approach recognizes that such acts are not only assaults on individual journalists but also violations of fundamental rights that underpin inclusive and democratic societies. Accordingly, the methodology aligns with international human rights standards, including the protection of freedom of expression, access to information, and other core rights such as the rights to life, security, and dignity, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Central to this approach is the understanding of the responsibility of the state to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights in line with international human rights law.

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

ability to work freely and safely. Such other rights include:

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

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

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

## Who/what is included in the data?

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

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

## Classification of human rights violations

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

These human rights violations are furthermore classified into types of acts corresponding to human rights violations. Controlled vocabulary developed for the purpose of systematically categorizing and sub-categorizing violation types is grounded in human rights standards and draws on a combination of sources including the UN International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS)<sup>6</sup>, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 16.10.1<sup>7</sup> and key human rights provisions<sup>8</sup>.

It can be noted that a violation-event targeting a journalist may involve several types

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

## Data collection and verification

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

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

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

## Scope and limitations

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

<sup>6</sup> The International Crime Classifications is a framework to systematically classify and categorise different types of crime for the purpose of data collection, analysis, and international comparison. It provides a standardized methodology for classifying crimes which supports data comparability. The cases included in this report fall within international crime classifications including censorship (ICCS 08031), arbitrary detention (ICCS 020222), legal harassment (ICCS 0806), discrimination (ICCS 0210), and assault (ICCS 02011).

<sup>7</sup> Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 16.10.1 measures enjoyment of fundamental rights covering: 'Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights defenders in the previous 12 months.' See: [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/SDG\\_Indicator\\_16\\_10\\_1\\_Guidance\\_Note.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/SDG_Indicator_16_10_1_Guidance_Note.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> These human rights provisions include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)

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

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

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

### **Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.
3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
  - (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;
  - (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (order public), or of public health or morals.

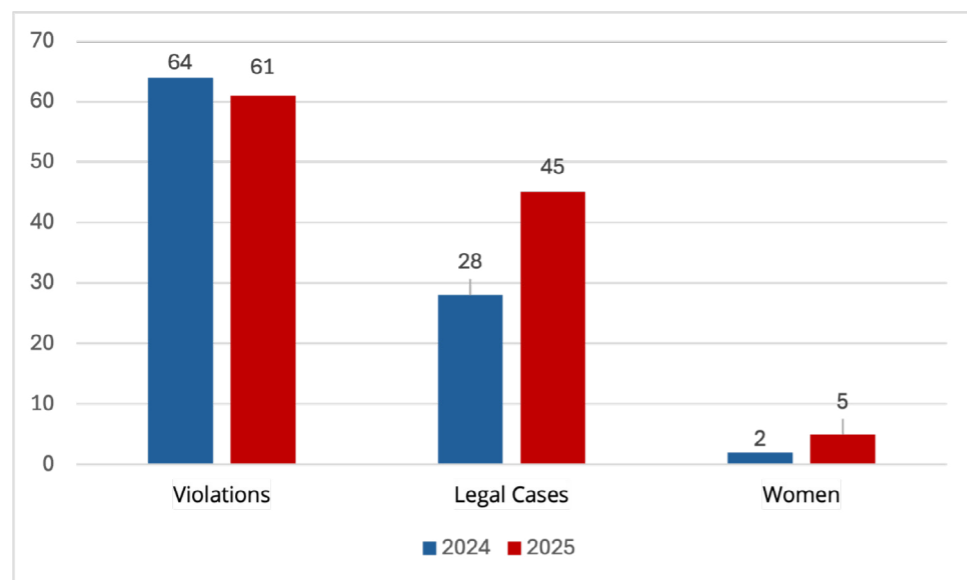


## **IV. Key Findings**

During 2025, CamboJA documented 61 violations, affecting 57 journalist<sup>9</sup> linked directly to journalistic work and five of these violations targeted women journalists. The recorded violations occurred in 39 separate incidents, meaning that multiple journalists were exposed to human rights violations in connection with the same incident or news reporting event. The acts documented of violations against women journalist in 2025 (5 cases) was higher compared to 2024 during which two cases recorded.

The total cases documented this year represent approximately 5% decline compared to 2024, during which 64 violations were recorded. This decline does, however, not signal an improvement in press freedom. Instead, documented cases - as a whole - indicate an increasingly restrictive media environment, characterized by regulatory controls and legal actions/intimidation. In terms of legal/actions intimidations, 45 cases were documented during 2025, corresponding to or 74% of the total violations. This represents a 61% increase compared with 2024 when 28 cases were recorded.

**chart presents the number of violations.**



From January to December 2025, CamboJA documented that six journalists were arrested, charged and imprisoned, representing the legal actions most commonly taken by state actors to target journalists. These cases include two instances when journalists were sentenced to 14 years in prison on charges of treason linked to the Cambodia-Thailand border conflict. In addition four journalists were placed in pretrial detention on incitement charges for periods ranging from ten days to seven months (See table 4). This can be compared to the situation in 2024, five journalists were charged and placed in pre-trial detention.

In 2025, CamboJA recorded five media licenses revoked by the Ministry of Information (three licenses were revoked in 2024).

Violations recorded targeted both local and foreign journalists and media organizations. State actors were responsible for the majority of cases, 51 cases out of 61. This represents a 16% increase compared to 2024, when 44 incidents were carried out by state actors. Four journalists, including one female journalist faced repeated violations in 2025. The violations range from physical assault to detention and lawsuit.

CamboJA documented seven cases of violations that journalists reported to media organisations, human rights groups and foreign embassies in Phnom Penh. In addition, six cases were filed with authorities. Out of the cases filed with authorities, two were fully resolved as the individuals responsible were sentenced and jailed. The remaining four cases are still pending.

Journalists affected by violations in 2025 included reporters, publishers, editors, directors, producers, and photographers, with seven identified as freelance journalists. Those working for online platforms, particularly publishing on Facebook, were more likely to experience violations than those affiliated with traditional media such as print, television, or radio. Among 57 affected journalists, four were from media outlets affiliated with the government, including one from a politically well-connected television station, one from a radio outlet, and one from a print publication.

The violations took various forms of legal action and intimidation, including 22 cases of summons/interrogation, 13 cases of detention, six cases of imprisonment and pre-trial detention, and four instances of legal harassment. In many cases involving summons or interrogation, journalists were arrested without warrants and due process, compelled to provide written and video-recorded apologies, and subjected to detention (See table 2 and table 4).

Other documented violations include nine cases of physical assaults (one sexual harassment, two assaults, one cross-fire injury and five threats of physical harm). During the reporting period, three cases of denials of access, two cases of intimidation, one case of editorial interference and one case of denial of entry to the country of a foreign journalist were documented.

Journalists covering environmental issues, border conflict, crime, land disputes, corruption, human rights, political and economic affairs were disproportionately targeted during 2025. Reporting on the Cambodia-Thailand border conflict alone accounted for 23 cases, followed by seven cases of environmental reporting, seven cases of crimes and four cases of corruption-related reporting.

In 2024, CamboJA documented 16 cases related to environmental issues. In 2025, however, journalists' reporting priorities shifted toward the Cambodia-Thailand border conflict. Despite this shift, coverage of environmental issues remained comparatively high among reporting topics, ranking second overall.

<sup>9</sup> Of the 61 recorded violations, four journalists experienced repeated incidents, with a total of 57 individual journalists affected.

The findings reflect:

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

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

**Table 1: Breakdown of violations by safety dimensions (January-December 2025)**

Safety dimension	Number of violations	Number of incidents
Legal Safety	45	23
Physical safety	9	9
Psychological safety	2	2
Other violations against the right to free don of expression	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>39</b>

Table 2 breaks down the types and frequency of human rights violations and acts recorded during the period. As shown, five key types of human rights violations occurred, including violations of the rights to physical security; psychological integrity; justice; due process and liberty as well as other violations against the right to freedom of expression.

As shown in Table 2, the most common violation type affecting journalists relates to rights to due process and liberty (41 violations in total), followed by right to physical security (9) and right to justice (4).

**Table 2: Types and frequency of human rights violations and acts recorded (January-December)**

Type of human right violation	Act included	Type of act	Number of violations
Right to physical security	Acts connected to journalistic activity causing bodily harm or intending to (threat) cause bodily harm	Assault	6
		Sexual assault	1
		Threat of physical harm	2
Right to psychological integrity	Acts connected to journalistic activity with included to induce fear or emotional distress	Intimidation	2
Right to justice	Arbitrary legal threats and action intended to discourage, restrict or control journalistic expression	Legal harrasment	4
Right to due process and liberty	Arbitrary legal acts against liberty intended to discourage, restrict or control journalistic expression	Detention	13
		Pre-trial detention	4
		Impresionment	2
		Arbitrary interrogation/summons	22
Other violations against right to freedom of expression	Acts constituting censorship or control of journalistic expression not covered elsewhere	Denial of access	3
		Editorial interference	1
		Denial of entry to country/expulsion of foreign nation from country	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>61</b>

In relation to violations against physical security, one journalist in Oddar Meanchey was seriously injured in cross-fire by a bullet fragment while reporting on clashes along the Cambodia–Thailand border. The case highlights the absence of adequate safety measures or protections for journalists covering conflict-related events in Cambodia<sup>10</sup>. In the Kandal province, a publisher was physically assaulted by a deputy provincial governor while live-streaming a public protest, illustrating how senior officials use force to silence critical reporting<sup>11</sup>.

One case of sexual assault in the workplace against a woman journalist was recorded, in which she experienced both physical and verbal assault<sup>12</sup>. In another incident, a woman journalist in Mondulkiri was threatened with physical harm at her home at night after publishing reports on suspected illegal mining. The attack damaged property and belongings of the journalist<sup>13</sup>.

In Stung Steng province, an environmental journalist from Intri Plus News was physically assaulted by three men after documenting illegal deforestation. His phone was destroyed and a complaint was later filed against him<sup>14</sup>.

A journalist from Sen Sok News in Seim Reap province was injured after being shot in the shoulder—possibly with a slingshot—while returning from investigating illegal logging<sup>15</sup>. During the reporting period, two journalists from Norkor Achhariyak in Stung Treng province were shot at while returning from reporting on illegal logging. In this incident, suspects were later arrested<sup>16</sup>.

CamboJA also documented one violation against the right to physical security in an incident where a foreign journalist was threatened with physical harm when taken into a room by a group of Chinese men for questioning while the journalist took a picture of a compound which was suspected to be used for running an online scam in Bavet, Svay Rieng province<sup>17</sup>.

Regarding other violations against right to freedom of expression restrictions on access (denial of access) to public spaces and information were evident in Phnom Penh when one radio journalists were barred by private security guards from documenting rising Mekong River water levels and warned him to leave the location before the action be taken<sup>18</sup>. We also documented a Muslim female journalist who was denied entry to a government ministry in Phnom Penh because she refused to remove her headscarf, which she said constituted religious discrimination<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> See the detail in annex case # 2

<sup>11</sup> See the detail in annex case # 5

<sup>12</sup> The detail case was not provided due to avoid do no harm

<sup>13</sup> See the detail in annex case # 4

<sup>14</sup> See the detail in annex case # 20

<sup>15</sup> See the detail in annex case # 24

<sup>16</sup> See the detail in annex case # 19

<sup>17</sup> See the detail in annex case # 17

<sup>18</sup> See the detail in annex case # 7

<sup>19</sup> See the detail in annex case # 25

In Tbong Khmom province, a journalist from KSN TV Online was forced to leave a commune office while attempting to report on a road construction bidding process<sup>20</sup>. During the reporting period, British journalist was denied re-entry to Cambodia after immigration authorities claimed his visa was “fraudulent.” The environmental reporter, known for exposing deforestation and environmental crimes, said he had been blacklisted without clear explanation<sup>21</sup>. In addition, a female journalist was pressured by a man claiming to represent the Cambodian Rice Federation to delete an article about Cambodia’s rice exports and reveal her sources<sup>22</sup>.

CamboJA documented two violations against the right to psychological integrity. In this case, a female journalist covering labor rights abuses received abusive messages and legal threats after refusing to disclose her sources<sup>23</sup>. A community radio journalist was intimidated by a Forestry Administration official who warned him not to report on damaged roads<sup>24</sup>.

Violations against the rights to due process and liberty as well as the right to justice, in cases where 22 journalists were arbitrarily summoned and/or interrogated for questioning, four placed in pre-trial detention and two sentenced to prison in connecting to reporting on environmental issues, border conflict, crime, land disputes, corruption, human rights, political and economic affairs.

For instance, an environmental journalist was arrested without explanation and placed in pre-trial detention linked to illegal deforestation reporting. The journalist experienced repeated violations in 2025, one physical and one legal incident<sup>25</sup>. A journalist from Banan Santepheap was also arrested and placed in pre-trial detention on incitement charges related to a Facebook post criticizing legal actions against him<sup>26</sup>. Other two online journalists from S.A TVHD Live24h and Cambodiastardailynews.com were arrested and charged with incitement after publishing a video alleging illegal gambling and abuse. Their media licenses were revoked and they were later placed in pre-trial detention which lasted seven months<sup>27</sup>.

The Ministry of Information revoked two additional licenses in 2025 – those of SLM News and Four Power News. This happened the same day journalists linked to the outlets were arrested in a kidnapping investigation<sup>28</sup>.

The most serious involved legal action against two journalists who were charged with treason and sentenced for 14 years imprisonment for allegedly photographing sensitive military areas near the Cambodia–Thailand border and sharing images online<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> See the detail in annex case # 23

<sup>21</sup> See the detail in annex case # 32

<sup>22</sup> See the detail in annex case # 29

<sup>23</sup> The detail case was not provided due to the journalist concern about safety or retaliation.

<sup>24</sup> See the detail in annex case # 16

<sup>25</sup> See the detail in annex case # 20

<sup>26</sup> See the detail in annex case # 26

<sup>27</sup> See the detail in annex case # 30

<sup>28</sup> See the detail in annex case # 18

<sup>29</sup> See the detail in annex case # 12

In relation to the border conflict reporting, six journalists, including a female reporter were arrested and questioned by police in Oddar Meanchey while covering a bomb-damaged bridge reportedly linked to Thai military activity. The police confiscated the journalists' equipment and questioned them for several hours on suspicion of espionage<sup>30</sup>. CamboJA also documented that nine journalists traveling to cover the Cambodia–Thailand border conflict were taken to a police station for questioning, with two held for about two hours and their equipment inspected<sup>31</sup>. A journalist from Meatophoum News was also detained for three hours while livestreaming about the border conflict and he was also forced to sign an agreement to stop reporting on the issue. Authorities accused him of failing to use a press card issued by the Ministry of Information<sup>32</sup>. Related to the border reporting, a journalist from BC News was also questioned by police while documenting displaced civilians near the border<sup>33</sup>.

In addition to the incidents linked to border conflict reporting, an online TV journalist from CCN Online TV was arrested and later released under court supervision. Later the license of the media outlet for which the journalist worked was revoked by the Ministry of Information, accusing the outlet of publishing “incitement information” related to border conflict reporting<sup>34</sup>. In Preah Vihear province, a freelance journalist was summoned and questioned by the provincial governor while reporting in a border conflict area and pressured to seek permission before reporting<sup>35</sup>.

A publisher from Questioncam News was arbitrarily arrested after reporting alleged irregularities in a local market and released after issuing a public apology<sup>36</sup>. In Battambang province, two journalists were reportedly forced to leave the Battambang province after receiving summons letter from provincial military police, fearing legal action while two other journalists were detained for eight hours by military police over their reporting on a drug crackdown<sup>37</sup>.

In Banteay Meanchey, a publisher from Khmer Cheayden News was placed under judicial supervision following a lawsuit linked to his reporting on a police chief. In 2025, The journalist experienced repeated violations during which the previous violation, the Publisher was detained overnight and questioned over a complaint filed by a police chief concerning an article about an assault case<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> See the detail in annex case # 18

<sup>31</sup> See the detail in annex case # 12

<sup>32</sup> See the detail in annex case # 1

<sup>33</sup> See the detail in annex case # 15

<sup>34</sup> See the detail in annex case #10

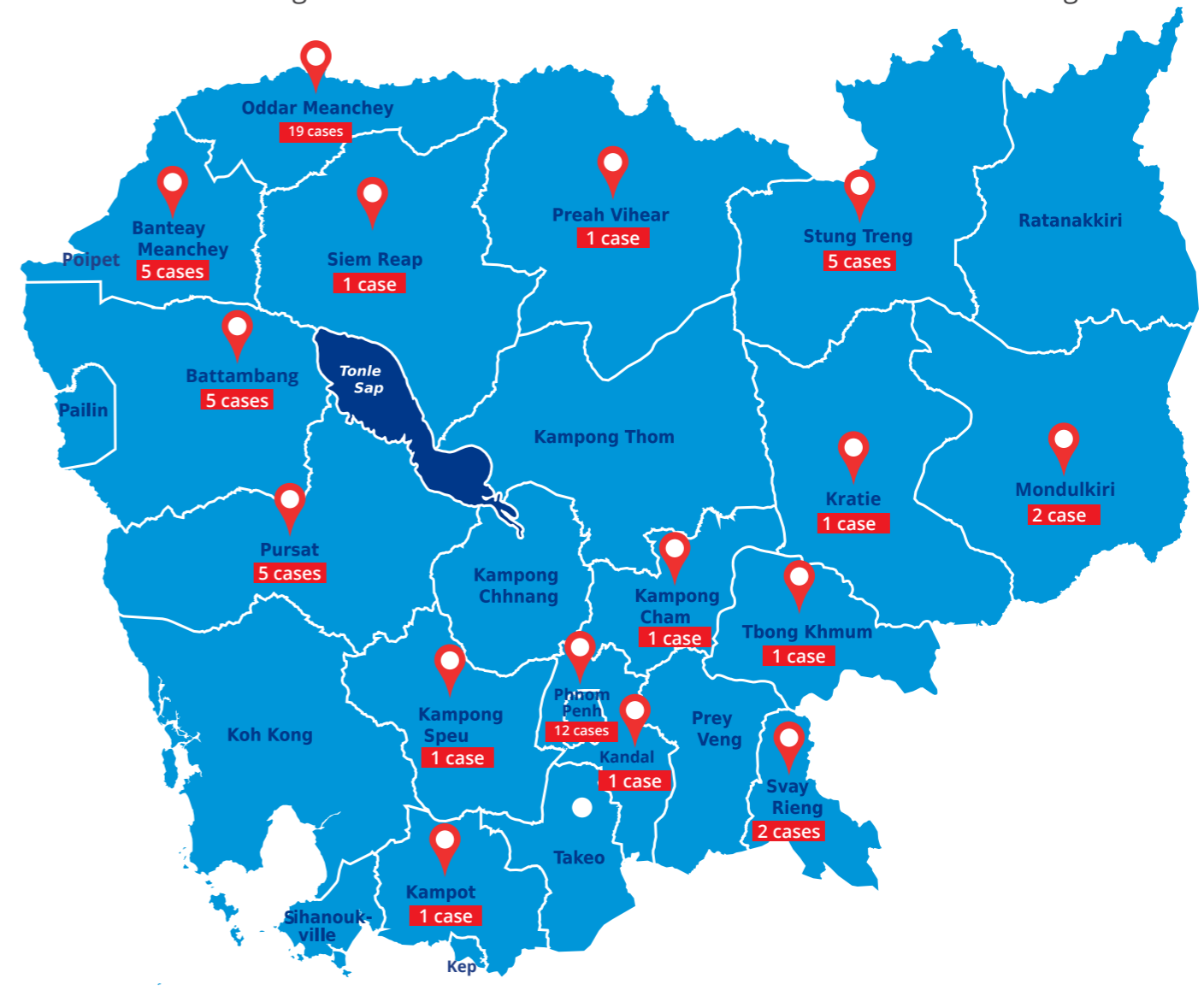
<sup>35</sup> See the detail in annex case # 14

<sup>36</sup> See the detail in annex case #11

<sup>37</sup> See the detail in annex case # 8

<sup>38</sup> See the detail in annex case # 3

In another cases, a journalist in Stung Treng province was summoned by environmental authorities for questioning after reporting on illegal fishing and land clearing in a protected area<sup>39</sup>. In Svay Rieng province, the publisher of KH Plus News was questioned by provincial court, accusing him of defamation and incitement related to posts alleging corruption in a road construction bidding process<sup>40</sup>. In Pursat, the publisher of LS Luos Seng News was taken in by Veal Veng district police for questioning for at least three hours after he made a live report about villagers protest<sup>41</sup>. Another publisher of Srotob Yuvakvey News (SY TV) was arrested by Banteay Meanchey provincial military police for about three hours and forced to sign an apology after publishing content allegedly harming a leader's reputation<sup>42</sup>. In Puset, four journalists from UMA News and Phnom Kravanh Post were arrested while covering a land dispute affecting a community forest. Two were detained for two days and pressured to reveal their sources<sup>43</sup>. In Phnom Penh, two journalists from San Prum News were questioned by the Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) after interviewing the wife of a detained official who criticized the ACU investigation<sup>44</sup>.



<sup>39</sup> See the detail in annex case # 13

<sup>40</sup> See the detail in annex case # 22

<sup>41</sup> See the detail in annex case # 31

<sup>42</sup> See the detail in annex case # 21

<sup>43</sup> See the detail in annex case # 27

<sup>44</sup> See the detail in annex case # 28

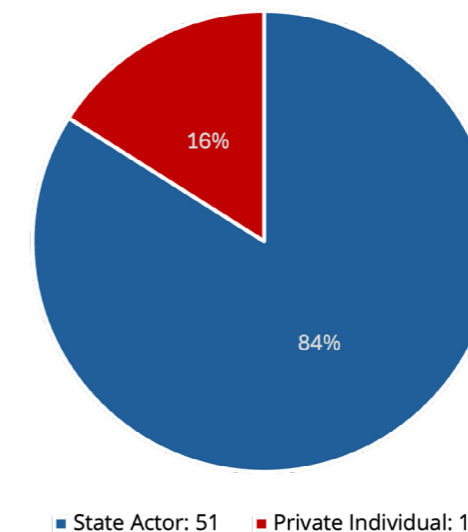
When it comes to the locations where violations occurred, the highest number of incidents took place in the Oddar Meanchey province (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Frequency of reported incidents and violations by location**

City/province	Number of violations	Number of incidents
Oddar Meachey	19	6
Phnom Penh (City)	12	10
Banteay Meanchey (Province)	5	5
Pursat (province)	5	2
Battambang (Province)	5	2
Stung Treng (Province)	5	4
Svay Rieng (Province)	2	2
Mondulkiri (Province)	2	1
Kratie (Province)	1	1
Kampot (Province)	1	1
Preah Vihear (Province)	1	1
Kampong Speu (Province)	1	1
Tbong Khmum (Province)	1	1
Siem Reap (province)	1	1
Kandal (Province)	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>39</b>

51 violations linked with 30 incidents, were allegedly perpetrated by state actors. These actors were categorized across local, provincial and national level authorities in relation to coverage of the border conflict, land disputes, environmental issues, corruption, crime, and politics. Of the 51 cases, one incident involved a journalist being injured in cross-fire related to the conflict between Cambodia and Thailand. 10 incidents involved private individuals or private security actors, often in retaliation for coverage of environmental issues, crimes, the economy and local politics.

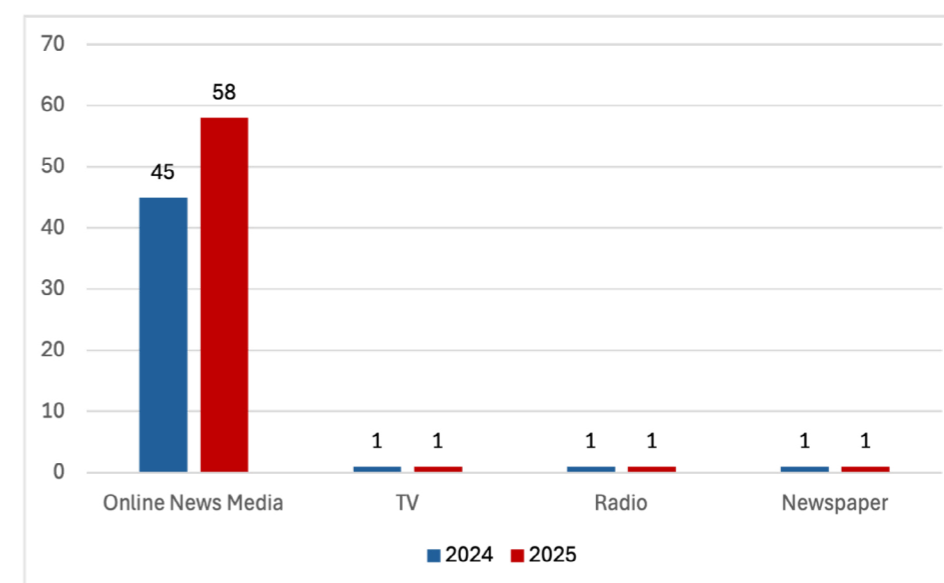
*chart illustrates the percentage of violations committed by action takers*



The predominance of violations committed by state actors highlights persistent restrictions on freedom of expression and press freedom, constituting a clear breach of international human rights obligations and perpetuating a culture of impunity. The data also shows that documented violations were linked to coverage on the Cambodia-Thai conflict, social accountability, mining, labor rights and protest.

Online journalists, especially those based on Facebook, were more likely to face harassment than reporters working at traditional outlets like newspapers and television/radio stations.

*chart shows the types of media platforms encounter violation*



As shown in Table 4, there were six cases involving imprisonment and pre-trial detention. Of these, two journalists were sentenced to 14 years in prison, while four were released.

**Table 4: Journalists imprisoned/detained in 2025**

Affected journalists	Institution	Location	Charge	Date of arrest	Date of release	Status
<b>Duong Akara</b>	S.A TVHD Live 24h	Phnom Penh	Incitement to disrupt social security	21 Jan 2025	25 Jul 2025	Unknown
<b>Lay Socheat</b>	Cambodiastar dailynews	Phnom Penh	Incitement to disrupt social security	21 Jan 2025	25 Jul 2025	Unknown
<b>Chheang Phalla</b>	Banon Sonthepheap	Battambang	Incitement to disrupt social security	12 March 2025	10 April 2025	Released on bail
<b>Uk Mao</b>	Intri Plus News	Stung Treng	Incitement to commit a felony and public defamation	16 May 2025	25 May 2025	Released on bail
<b>Pheap Pheara</b>	TSP68TV Online	Siem Reap	Treason	31 July 2025	Remains in prison	Sentenced
<b>Phon Sopheap</b>	Battambang Post	Siem Reap	Treason	31 July 2025	Remains in prison	Sentenced

## V. Case Study

### 1. Local Journalist Silenced by Multiple Lawsuits

Since beginning his journalism career in 2021, Chheang Phalla has actively reported on issues affecting communities in Banan district, Battambang province—particularly environmental destruction, a topic that has drawn disapproval from local authorities and mounting, legal pressure.

Between October and November 2024, Banan district governor Sreng Sokha filed five separate lawsuits against Phalla, accusing him of incitement and defamation. Phalla was first summoned by the court on December 18, 2024, and again on March 10, 2025. “It’s because they don’t like me as a journalist,” Phalla told CamboJA.

In early 2025, Phalla became the subject of another legal action—this time at the provincial level—after he publicly criticized the legal actions taken against him. On March 12, 2025, at around 3 p.m., he was arbitrarily arrested by Battambang provincial authorities at a coffee shop in Battambang City.

Two days later, on March 14, the Battambang Provincial Court ordered his pre-trial detention on charges of incitement to disturb social security under Article 495 of Cambodia’s Criminal Code. The case was reportedly based on Facebook posts made between October 2024 and March 10, 2025, in which Phalla frequently questioned the governance practices of local authorities.



*Chheang Phalla, a publisher of Banan Santepheap news talked to CamboJA at his home in Banan district on 23 June 2025 (photo: Sorn Sarath)*

According to CamboJA's records, incitement charges have been increasingly used against journalists in recent years, particularly in response to critical posts on social media. This pattern reflects a broader and growing trend of suppressing press freedom in Cambodia's digital space.

Phalla maintains that his arrest was not directly related to the lawsuits filed by the district governor. Instead, he believes the immediate trigger was a Facebook post published on March 10, in which he criticized the legal measures taken against him.

After nearly a month in pre-trial detention, the 41-year-old publisher of Banan Santepheap was released on bail on April 10, 2025. He said his release followed an apology he made to the court and a request for intervention submitted to the Ministry of Information.

However, Phalla said the terms of his release bar him from engaging in any journalistic activities. He is now calling for the charges to be dropped so he can resume reporting. "The court has banned me from practicing journalism while I'm under supervision," he said. "That's why I'm urging the court to drop the charges, so I can return to my work as a journalist."

Initially, Phalla received legal assistance from a local rights group through the referral process of CamboJA. He was provided a lawyer for one of the cases filed by the district governor. However, he noted that support from civil society organizations (CSOs) has become increasingly limited due to cuts in U.S. funding for independent media, CSOs, and human rights defenders.

"The lawyer told me that because of the funding cuts, it's difficult for them [lawyer] to travel to the provinces," he said. "So I decided to seek legal assistance from the Ministry of Information and requested intervention from the Minister."

### Posts and reports led to the lawsuits:

- On November 1, 2024, Phalla posted pictures of an excavator digging the foot of the mountain. In the caption it questioned the Banan district governor if the government had the right to "sell the mountain", which is a state property to a private individual for his own benefits.
- On November 2, 2024, Phalla posted pictures of a canal where landfilling was done, with a caption that houses were being constructed on a canal which had been filled with sand.
- On October 22, 2024, the media outlet made a live video about the irregularities in the use of funds to support athlete rowers which was later denied by the district administration which issued a statement, saying it was disinformation.

- On October 26, 2024, Phalla posted a status, sharing that "pieces of wood removed from a school were sold to a private individual."
- On October 30, 2024, Phalla posted pictures of a local market with a caption saying that the market was built with state budget but was rented to local vendors at a high price.
- On March 10, 2025, Phalla posted a status criticizing the legal actions taken against him. The post was later removed."

## 2. Environmental Journalist Battles 22 Lawsuits

Indigenous environmental journalist Uk Mao from Stung Treng province is battling 22 lawsuits and repeated intimidation for his reporting on deforestation.

Most recent is a civil case filed by an individual known as Kim Thavina, demanding \$32,267 and 100 million riels in damages.

A court warrant dated August 12, 2025, seen by CamboJA on August 20, ordered Mao to appear at Stung Treng provincial court on August 21, just a day after he received the notification.

Mao began his journalism career in 2017 with Mohahang News. He was hit with his first lawsuit in 2021 while working for Ta Khmao Thmey News. In 2022, he joined Intri Plus News. By August 2025, the number of lawsuits filed against him grew to 22.



Environmental journalist Uk Mao, who faces multiple lawsuits (photo: Sorn Sarath)

Despite working without a salary, Mao continued reporting on deforestation in an effort to defend community forests. Mao has no formal journalism training and does not write full articles. He travels into the forest, interviews communities, takes photos and videos, and sends them to his publisher.

However, Mao said that only a few of his reports have been published, while many others, especially those implicating high-ranking officials in deforestation, were cast aside.

Out of 22 cases, 18 were filed by provincial environmental officials and forest rangers—one by a private company, and three by individuals. The accusations range from incitement and defamation to forest land clearing. Mao believes the lawsuits are part of a systematic campaign to silence him.

“Because I spoke [reported] about their ‘rice pot’ [impacting their benefits], they fabricated accusations against me in order to bring me to court, so that the court would punish me, making it easier for them to do business,” he said.

Mao said that 17 lawsuits were represented by only two plaintiffs.

He said the Ministry of Information rejected his request for a press card in early 2025, leaving him reliant only on an ID issued by his publisher. But, he said, his publisher is also under pressure now as his contract with Intri Plus News has ended.

On May 22, the Ministry of Information stated that Mao did not possess an official press card and his actions violated the professional code of ethics for journalists. Mao said he would find another media outlet to continue his work.

## Complaint ignored

On March 24, 2025, Mao sustained minor injuries to his face when he was physically assaulted by three individuals, who also destroyed his smartphone.

Two days later, Mao filed a complaint with the district police. However, he was informed that a separate complaint had also been filed against him. Authorities did not disclose who lodged the complaint.

He said any lawsuit filed against him was “effective”. “When the complaint is filed against me, they [the court] take action within a month. Sometimes, I receive three summonses in a single month — one for this case, another for that case.”

On May 16, 2025, Mao was arrested at his home by Stung Treng provincial military police. He spent 10 days in pre-trial detention on charges of incitement to commit a felony and public defamation. Before his arrest, Mao was already facing up to 17 legal cases.

After being released on bail, he faced five new lawsuits — three from environmental officials and two by private individuals — for allegedly clearing forest land in Stung Treng and occupying private land in Preah Vihear.

Mao insisted that the allegations are fabricated. He said he has never cleared or occupied forest land, noting that he was being “framed” to justify prosecuting him as a journalist. In 2023, his house was burned down. “They burned my house, beat me and even put me in jail,” he said. “The court’s action is unfair. I am the victim.”

His plight underscores the growing risks faced by environmental journalists in Cambodia, where exposing illegal activities often leads to criminalization, violence, and attempts to erase their voices.

## VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings documented by CamboJA over the course of 2025 demonstrate that Cambodia's media environment remains in more restrictive phase as well as has entered a new phase of repression, characterized by the normalization of legal intimidation, expanded regulatory control, and entrenched impunity for violations against journalists.

While the total number of documented violations shows a slight numerical decline compared to 2024, this change does not reflect improved conditions for press freedom. Instead, documented cases - as a whole - indicate an increasingly restrictive media environment, characterized by regulatory controls and legal actions/intimidation.

Violations in 2025 were overwhelmingly linked to journalistic work in the public interest and were concentrated in online media, with social media—particularly Facebook—emerging as a high-risk reporting space. The repeat violations against individual journalists have been reflecting the systematic patterns of targeting, particularly against journalists who continue to report on sensitive issues.

The most alarming development of the year was the sentencing of two journalists to 14 years' imprisonment, the first such case in Cambodia's history against journalists. This is also the first case after the government adopted the citizenship remove law. This unprecedented use of treason charges against journalists marks a decisive shift toward the criminalization of journalism itself, particularly where reporting intersects with issues framed as national security. Together with the use of pre-trial detention, prolonged court supervision, and multiple lawsuits against individual journalists it signals a punitive approach designed not only to punish but to deter critical reporting more broadly.

Legal pressure emerged as the dominant tactic of repression. Journalists were routinely summoned, interrogated, arrested, detained, or charged under criminal provisions such as incitement, treason, or vague national security offenses, rather than through civil remedies provided under the Press Law. Many of these actions were carried out without warrants or due process safeguards that infringed both Cambodia's constitutional, particularly Articles 38, 41, and 43, as well as the country's obligations under international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Beyond legal breaches, the cumulative effect of these violations has been to narrow civic space, weaken public access to independent information, and undermine democratic accountability at a critical moment for Cambodia's political and social development.

Administrative and regulatory controls further reinforced this climate of fear. The revocation of multiple media licenses, alongside new requirements on journalistic qualifications and press card issuance, expanded discretionary power over who may practice journalism. Although officially justified as efforts to combat “fake news” and professionalize the sector, these measures have deepened concerns about censorship and state control over media content.

A majority of the documented violations were allegedly perpetrated by state actors, including local, provincial, and national authorities. This predominance of alleged state implication, combined with the extremely low rate of accountability, highlights a systemic culture of impunity.

In conclusion, the evidence from 2025 shows that Cambodia remains far from fulfilling its constitutional and international commitments to press freedom. The increasing use of criminal law, regulatory barriers, and administrative sanctions reflects a deliberate shift toward legalized repression of independent journalism. Without urgent reforms, meaningful accountability, and the restoration of legal safeguards for journalists, these practices risk becoming further entrenched—with long-term consequences not only for the media sector, but for the public's right to information and the health of democratic governance in Cambodia.

### Recommendations

We continue to call on the government and relevant authorities to promote press freedom and respect for journalists' professional obligations. More specifically, we urge the authorities and other stakeholders to:

1. Refrain from bringing criminal charges against journalists and citizen journalists in relation to their journalistic work.
2. End impunity by promptly investigating, prosecuting and redressing cases of violence against journalists and human rights defenders.
3. Provide dedicated support, training and resources to units tasked with investigating crimes against journalists, including on investigating such crimes in a gender-sensitive manner.
4. Immediately drop pending charges and review criminal sentences against journalists and human rights defenders and investigate cases of violence against these groups.
5. Develop and implement training initiatives for law enforcement authorities on respecting the rights of journalists to report and record at protests and other public events.
6. Enact a broadcasting law that establishes an independent broadcasting authority and clear and neutral rules for the allocating broadcasting licenses, in line with international standards.

7. Enact an access to information law that aligns with international standards in 2025.
8. Amend the Criminal Code to align with international freedom of expression standards, including to repeal or amend the incitement crimes (Art. 494, 495) and to repeal the lèse majesté offense (Art. 437-bis), public defamation (Art. 305) and public insult (Art. 307).
9. Amend the Press Law to align with international standards by establish a meaningful consultation process with media and other relevant stakeholders, and establish clear rules around press accreditation and press registration, and refrain from requiring online media licenses.
10. Hold meaningful consultations on draft laws which impact freedom of expression to allow civil society to provide inputs and to ensure alignment with the U.N.'s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), including the draft laws related to cybercrime, cybersecurity, and personal data protection.
11. Repeal the Ministry of Information Prakas that authorizes the government to revoke media licenses without judicial processes, violating press freedom principles and article 41 of the Cambodian constitution.
12. Repeal the Inter-ministerial Prakas No. 170 used to revoke media licenses without court decision as well as grant the government power to order ISPs to block sites, and the sub-decrees on domain name registration, mandatory SIM card registration and the national internet gateway.
13. Place clear limits on the power of authorities to engage in surveillance and to block Internet sites without a court order and revise the Telecommunications Law to align with international standards.
14. Increase internet access to citizens to ensure all Cambodians can receive news online. This could be done by:
  - Ensuring equal access by marginalised groups of people, including women, people with disabilities, and ethnolinguistic minorities.
  - Incentivising the telecommunications sector to provide low-cost options in both urban and rural areas through tax breaks, subsidies, or similar schemes.
  - Expanding mobile services in rural areas, accompanied by credits or subsidies to citizens who are unable to afford personal internet use or devices.
  - Setting up community internet centres where the internet and computers are free for community members to use or come at a low cost.
15. Increase digital literacy education both in formal education settings such as schools and universities as well as in informal education settings. The aim is for Cambodians to be able to discern good sources of information from the bad as well as to be able to evaluate the news they receive.

## VII. Annex

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

Six journalists, including one woman journalist from two local media outlets were separately arrested by Cheung Tean commune police while covering a damaged bridge in Chongkal district that had reportedly been bombed by the Thai military. One of the journalists from Cambodianess told CamboJA that he and his colleagues were taken to the commune police station for questioning for approximately two hours on 16 December 2025.

The incident occurred when their team traveled to Cheung Tien commune, Oddar Meanchey province, to report on a site reportedly struck by a bomb involving Thai military forces. According to the journalist, police approached the team while they were taking photographs of the bomb site and a nearby refugee camp, and then escorted them to the commune police post. He said police accused the journalists of not carrying an official mission letter and expressed suspicion that they were engaged in espionage. The journalist added that police temporarily seized their mobile phones and camera for inspection and required them to write a statement confirming their status as journalists. The four were released after completing the questioning.

The female journalist from another media outlet who was arrested on the same day and the same place said that authorities had not informed that the area was restricted, and they therefore went to the site to report on the incident. She explained that while they were preparing to take photos and video footage at the location, police officers arrived and shouted at them, asking why they were taking photographs and which media outlet they represented.

According to the journalist, police searched their vehicle, checked for GPS devices, and confiscated their phones. Officers also requested a mission letter and subsequently took the journalists to the police post, where they were questioned for several hours. Police reportedly told them that the area was restricted due to concerns about espionage. The journalist said that following the submission of written statements detailing their identities and professional profiles, they were released. (Type of act: detention)

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

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

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

She told CamboJA that around 6 a.m. on December 8, 2025, an explosion was heard near their village. Her father immediately left home to cover the incident.

Shortly afterward, she tried calling him but received no response. She later learned that he had been seriously wounded by a bullet fragment that struck his mouth. She believes the incident occurred between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. Chham was sent for emergency treatment at the provincial health center. (Type of act: crossfire injury)

### 3. November 30, 2025, Kapat province

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

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

When asked which specific report might have prompted the arrest, he said he was unsure, explaining that he had published multiple reports exposing alleged inactivity and irregularities in Kapat province. However, he believes the arrest may be linked to a livestream he conducted on 29 November at Samiki Market, where he reported on irregularities in the market's management. Prior to the arrest, a post on the Questioncam News Facebook page stated that "a group of police arbitrarily arrested me and forced me to go to Kapat city after I reported irregularities at the Samiki Market." The post was later removed.

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

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

### 4. November 16, 2025, Monduliri province

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A publisher from AK News was physically assaulted and banned from reporting by the Kandal Deputy Provincial Governor while covering a public protest through a live stream. According to a video shared on Facebook, the incident occurred on October 26, 2025, in Kandal Steung district, Kandal province, during a protest where residents demanded that Oknha Leng Navatra fulfill his promise to provide houses to buyers. The video shows the deputy governor pushing a journalist aside as he attempted to interview the governor.

Speaking to CamboJA, the journalist said he had gone to the protest site after receiving information from villagers who were blocking National Road 6A to call for the promised housing delivery. When he arrived, provincial authorities were already at the scene to mediate the situation. He attempted to interview the deputy governor about possible solutions, but the official refused to respond and instead pushed him on the shoulder. He expressed disappointment over the incident, saying that despite his efforts to report in public interest, he was treated disrespectfully by the authorities.

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

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

The court ordered Thab Reang to comply with strict conditions under Article 223 of the Criminal Code.

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

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

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

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

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

## 7. October 1, 2025, Phnom Penh

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

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

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

## 8. September 214, 025, Preah Vihear

On 14 September 2025, a freelance journalist was summoned for questioning by the Preah Vihear provincial governor while he was at Wat Pour 5000 camp in Kulen Tbong village, Kulen Tbong commune, Kulen district, Preah Vihear province. No clear reason was provided for the summons.

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

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

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

The journalist explained that he was a freelancer contributing to CCIM and CamboJA.

The governor pressed for more details, asking about the types of stories he had written and how many organizations he worked for. The questioning lasted more than an hour. The governor also summoned the soldier's wife who had spoken with the journalist for questioning, reportedly asking her: "What did the journalist ask you?"

The journalist said the incident made him feel unsafe and that he believed there was no legitimate reason for the authorities to pressure him into disclosing his sources. (Type of act: Summons/interrogation)

## 9. September 8, 2025, Battambang province

On September 8, 2025, two journalists were detained for at least eight hours by Battambang provincial military police over reporting on a local drug crackdown in Sampov Lun district while two other journalists summoned in the same case fled the province, fearing arrest.

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

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

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

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

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

Meanwhile, two other journalists who received summonses from the provincial military police fled the province temporarily, citing concerns for their safety. One told CamboJA that after hearing of his colleagues’ arrests, he feared legal action and chose not to comply with the summons. The second journalist could not be reached for comment. (Type of act: Detention)

#### **10. August 18, 2025, Banteay Meanchey province**

**Meatophoum News Journalist Detained by O’Chrov District Police Over Border Reporting**  
On August 28, 2025, a journalist from Meatophoum News was detained by O’Chrov district police while livestreaming about the Cambodia–Thailand border conflict.

The incident occurred in Chouk Cheay village, O’Beichoan commune, O’Chrov district, Banteay Meanchey province, according to the local rights group LICADHO.

Speaking to CamboJA on the same day, the journalist said he was held for three hours before being released. He explained that police forced him to sign a contract agreeing to stop reporting on the border issue and to delete all related photos and videos.

Authorities accused him of failing to use a press card issued by the Ministry of Information, the journalist said. He added that his release came following the intervention of Khem Bunthong, Secretary of State at the Office of the Council of Ministers.

The journalist told CamboJA that, for his own safety, he will temporarily suspend reporting on the border conflict. (Type of act: Detention)

#### **11. August 26, 2025, Banteay Meanchey province**

On August 26, 2025, online TV journalist Meas Sara was arrested after reporting on a border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand.

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

According to local rights group Licadho, Sara was charged with incitement, though no official court documents have been made public. CamboJA was unable to verify the charge. However, while no authorities have formally confirmed the charge, reports indicate that Sara has been placed under court supervision.

This was not the first time the journalist livestreamed from the border area. On August 20, Sara filmed an interview with a resident of Prek Chan village in O’Beichoan commune, O’Chrov district. The resident claimed that Thai soldiers expelled six Cambodian families and dismantled a Cambodian military outpost. The following day, the Ministry of Information accused Sara of spreading “incitement information” and officially revoked his license.

Sara told CamboJA on August 22 that, a day before his license was revoked, he had been summoned by the Ministry of Information to discuss journalistic ethics and professionalism regarding his reporting on the border dispute. (Type of act: Detention and legal harassment)

#### **12. July 31, 2025, Oddar Meanchey province**

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

On 17 December 2025, the two journalists have been sentenced to 14 years in prison by the Siem Reap Provincial Court.

The lawyer told CamboJA on 19 February 2026 that said the journalists were sentenced on December 17, 2025, in Siem Reap province, with the verdict announced on the same day.

On July 29, 2025, the two journalists traveled to the border area to report on conditions there and to deliver humanitarian donations to soldiers stationed along the border. During the visit, they posted a photograph taken at Ta Krabei Temple that showed landmines in the background. The image was later widely circulated by Thai media outlets.

Earlier, on September 10, 2025, the court stated that the two journalists had been arrested on suspicion of gathering information and taking photographs in a prohibited military zone near a battlefield. The court claimed that these actions could undermine national defense. (Type of act: imprisonment)

### **13. July 31, 2025, Steung Treng province**

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

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

The journalist, who has contributed to outlets including Norkor Achharyak and Mekong News, told CamboJA on August 5, 2025, that he was questioned the same day. He declined to disclose what questions were asked. However, the reports were removed shortly after the questioning.

In a statement issued on August 5, 2025, and seen by CamboJA, the provincial environmental department rejected the journalist's reporting, claiming the reports were "inaccurate and incomplete." The department said that after inspecting the site, authorities found only abandoned fishing equipment and "no evidence of criminal activity."

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

This is not the first time the journalist has faced threats. On June 5, 2025, he was fired upon while returning from covering illegal logging activities in the Prey Lang Forest. (Type of act: Interrogation/summons)

### **14. July 26, 2025, Oddar Meanchey province**

On July 26, journalists from BC News were reportedly questioned by police in Chong Kal district, Oddar Meanchey province, while filming and photographing civilians displaced by the Cambodia–Thailand border conflict. The civilians were sheltering at a local pagoda and other designated safe locations, according to a report published by BC News.

A journalist, Serey Mony, said police questioned him about his reporting activities and raised concerns over any footage that might include military movements or the mobilization of weapons.

The journalists were taken in for questioning at 3:29 p.m. and released at 3:45 p.m. Mony clarified that they were not detained and that no equipment was confiscated during the interaction.

BC News is an online media outlet that primarily covers Buddhist religious events, activities of spiritual leaders, and economic developments. (Type of act: Interrogation/summons)

### **15. July 25, 2025, Oddar Meanchey province**

On July 25, 2025, at around 10 a.m., nine journalists — including one foreign correspondent — were reportedly taken to the Oddar Meanchey Provincial Police Station for questioning while en route to cover the Cambodia–Thailand border conflict.

Seven Cambodian journalists were released after about 10 minutes and allowed to retrieve all of their equipment. However, the remaining two — a foreign freelance journalist and a local fixer — were held for approximately two hours. According to one journalist, police confiscated their cameras and smartphones, inspecting the devices for images of military mobilization, weapons, or soldiers.

The journalists were also required to fill out personal information forms, declare their equipment, and provide details about their reporting activities. (Type of act: Interrogation/summons)

### **16. July 11, 2025, Kratie province**

A community radio journalist in Kratie province said he was intimidated by a local Forestry Administration official and told not to report on damaged roads in the area.

The journalist said that on July 11, 2025, he and a colleague traveled to Roluos Meanchey and Srae Chis communes in Kratie province to report on road damage and the construction of a new bridge. While stopping at a coffee shop in front of the Srae Chis Commune Hall in O'Krieng Saen Chey District, they interviewed local residents about the poor road conditions.

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

The journalist said the incident violated his right to freedom of expression and press freedom, which are guaranteed under the Cambodian Constitution. "It also affected my personal dignity because Mr. Tony pointed at me in front of another journalist and local residents," he added.

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

### 17. June 30, 2025, Svay Rieng province

A Japanese journalist was briefly detained by a group of Chinese nationals inside the compound of the so-called "Bavet Business Center" in the border town of Bavet, while investigating alleged scam operations.

Speaking to CamboJA on September 19, the journalist said the incident took place at around 7:00 p.m. on June 30. After checking into a hotel, he and his assistant walked around the downtown area, which is lined with casinos, as part of his news coverage. At the Bavet Business Center, he noticed a heavily guarded entrance gate and took a photograph. Within minutes, a Cambodian man approached him and asked: "What are you filming here? This is a no-photography zone. What is your purpose?"

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

He was taken to one of several residential buildings, where around 10 Chinese staff members confronted him. A Chinese man interrogated him for about 30 minutes before releasing him.

"I was not asked to sign any documents, but I was surrounded by more than 10 men, which was extremely intimidating," he said.

According to him, the interrogator warned: "Why did you come here? Delete all the photos you took here. You are not just a tourist. Do you understand what will happen if you don't obey?"

During the detention, the journalist's smartphone and DSLR camera were temporarily confiscated. He said his camera's SD card was seized, while the devices were inspected for image data.

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

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

### 18. June 17, 2025, Phnom Penh

The Ministry of Information has revoked the licenses of two media outlets, accusing their publishers of violating journalistic ethics and the press law.

On June 17, 2025, the ministry issued an official letter announcing the license revocations of SLM News and Four Power News.

Earlier that same day, three journalists affiliated with SLM News, Four Power News, and KNM News were arrested by the Preah Sihanouk provincial military police over allegations of involvement in the kidnapping of a Chinese national.

On June 20, Nget Sereivuthy, publisher of Four Power News, told CamboJA that he was unaware of the details surrounding his journalist's arrest, as he had been at the hospital on the day of the incident and could not verify what had happened.

He criticized the ministry's decision to revoke his outlet's license, claiming it was done without any prior consultation or formal notification. "This is unfair," he said, arguing that the alleged misconduct was committed by an individual and should not result in the punishment of the entire media organization.

CamboJA was unable to reach Sin Chansoriya, the publisher of SLM News, for comment. On June 21, CamboJA contacted the Ministry of Information's spokesman seeking clarification, but no response had been received. (Type of act: Legal harassment, license revocation)

### 19. June 5, 2025, Steung Treng province

On June 5, 2025, two journalists from Norkor Achharyak were threatened by gunfire while returning from covering illegal logging activities in the Prey Lang.

Speaking to CamboJA on June 9, the outlet's news editor recounted that around 10 p.m., he and a colleague were riding a motorcycle back from their reporting trip. While passing through Chamkar Leu commune in Thala Borivat district, Stung Treng province, they encountered two men and briefly spoke with them. Shortly afterward, as the journalists rode about 30 meters away, they heard gunshots behind them. The editor said he accelerated the motorcycle as the two men pursued them, firing three additional shots. Fortunately, neither journalist was injured.

The following day, June 6, the journalists filed a complaint with the Thala Borivat district police. Va Sophann, Deputy Chief of the Criminal Department at the Stung Treng Provincial Police, confirmed to CamboJA that the suspects had been arrested in response to the complaint. He said the suspects claimed they had fired into the air and did not intend to harm the journalists. Both men were sent to the provincial court for further investigation on the same day.

Chhum Seanghak, spokesperson for the Stung Treng Provincial Court, told CamboJA on June 10 that the two suspects have been charged with intentional acts of violence with aggravating circumstances and illegal possession of a weapon, under Articles 218 and 490 of the Penal Code. He added that both suspects are currently being held in pre-trial detention at the provincial prison.

The incident has been widely reported by local media to highlight concerns over the safety of journalists working in the field. (Type of act: threat of physical harm)

### **20. May 16, 2025, Steung Treng province**

Environmental journalist Uk Mao, who is reportedly facing multiple legal cases, was arrested on May 16, 2025, provincial military police.

Mao's wife told CamboJA that he was taken from their home around noon by two men, one of whom appeared to be a plainclothes officer. She said they did not present a warrant or offer any explanation. According to her, the men handcuffed Mao and told him, "Their boss wanted to speak to him about a piece of land." Later that same day, Mao was placed in pretrial detention at the Stung Treng provincial prison.

Just weeks earlier, on March 24, 2025, Mao—who reports for Intri Plus News—was physically assaulted by three individuals, reportedly former provincial officials. The attack left him with minor facial injuries and resulted in the destruction of his smartphone.

Speaking to CamboJA at the time, Mao said he had been investigating reports from local villagers about illegal deforestation in the Prey Lang community. At around 2:00 p.m., after photographing the site, he was stopped on his way home by three men who demanded he delete the images. When he refused, one of the men punched him and smashed his phone.

Mao filed a complaint with district police on March 26, but was told that a separate complaint had also been filed against him. Authorities declined to identify the complainant.

On April 24, the Stung Treng Provincial Court summoned Mao to appear on May 20 in connection with the alleged violence on March 24. Prior to his arrest, Mao told CamboJA he was facing as many as 15 legal cases. (Type of act: pre-trial detention and assault)

### **21. May 15, 2025, Banteay Meanchey province**

On May 15, 2025, the publisher of Srotob Yuvakvey News (SY TV) was reportedly arrested without explanation by three military police officers in Poipet.

Speaking to CamboJA, the journalist said he was arrested around 3:00 p.m. at the PTT gas station in Poipet town and taken to the Poipet Military Police Station. He stated that no reason was provided at the time of arrest, but during his detention, officers

informed him that the action followed an order from the Banteay Meanchey Provincial Court prosecutor. He was told the arrest related to news content that allegedly harmed a leader's reputation.

Although authorities did not specify which report led to the arrest, the journalist believes it may be linked to a leaked audio clip he published on SY TV's Facebook page earlier that day. The audio recording allegedly featured one journalist threatening another, saying that someone identified as "H.E. Pann Khembunthorng" was displeased with [report and that legal consequences would follow.

The journalist said he was detained for approximately three hours and released around 5:30 p.m. after signing a contract. The document included a written apology letter admitting wrongdoing, a recorded voice message acknowledging his mistake, and a thumbprint confirming agreement to stop publishing content that could affect the leader's reputation and refraining from spreading false information. (Type of act: detention)

### **22. May 13, 2025, Svay Rieng province**

The publisher of KH Plus News has been sued by an unidentified individual on charges of public defamation, public insult, incitement to commit a felony, and incitement to discrimination.

On May 19, 2025, the journalist received a summons from the Svay Rieng Provincial Court, requiring him to appear on May 28, 2025.

According to the summons, the complaint was filed on May 13, 2025, by a lawyer named Chi Kosal. While the complaint did not identify the plaintiff, it alleged that the journalist committed the above offenses in connection with a post made on the KH Plus News Facebook page on April 29, 2025.

Speaking to CamboJA, the journalist said he was unaware of who filed the complaint or which specific story or post prompted the lawsuit. However, he suspected that it may be linked to posts he published about alleged corruption in a public bidding process for a road construction project in Chres Commune, Svay Rieng Province, on April 25, 2025. A series of posts criticizing the bidding process and alleging corruption and irregularities were published on KH Plus News on April 25, 28, and 29.

On April 28, 2025, the Chres Commune Administration issued an official letter denying the allegations. The letter stated that the bidding process was conducted transparently and was not predetermined.

"The bidding was originally scheduled for April 3, 2025, but only two companies applied, which did not meet procurement requirements. Therefore, the bidding was postponed to April 25, when Bun Than Construction Company won the bid by offering the lowest price," the letter explained, rejecting all accusations made by KH Plus News.

This is not the first time the journalist has faced legal trouble. In 2024, he was summoned by the Kampong Cham Provincial Court for allegedly defaming the judicial institution. In that case, the Ministry of Information ordered the journalist to issue a public apology and remove the video report within 15 days. The ministry also issued a final warning, stating that KH Plus News' media license could be revoked and further legal action could be taken if similar violations occurred again. (Type of act: interrogation/summons)

### **23. May 13, 2025, Tbong Khmum province**

On May 13, 2025, a journalist from KSN TV Online was ordered to leave the premises of Lngieng commune in Tbong Khmum province while attempting to report on a public bidding process for a road construction project.

Local authorities claimed the journalist lacked official permission to cover the event and accused him of disrupting the proceedings by filming without prior authorization. The journalist told CamboJA that while he had not registered for the event, he believed journalists should be free to report on matters of public interest.

In a video posted on Facebook, a man identifying himself as a provincial procurement official is seen exiting the meeting hall and confronting the journalist about his presence. The official demands that any photos or videos be deleted and insists that the journalist's name was not on the list of approved media. He then orders commune police to remove the journalist from the premises.

"Without permission, you are not allowed to enter the commune administration! Out, out, out! Get him out!" the official is heard shouting in the video. He further claims the directive to remove the journalist came from the provincial level and instructs police to stop anyone from taking photos or videos without approval.

However, the footage shows the journalist standing outside the hall, within the commune compound, not inside the area where the bidding process was taking place.

Following the incident, several local media outlets reported that the authorities' actions represented a restriction on press freedom.

In response, the La Eang commune administration released a statement the next day denying the allegations. It claimed that media reports had caused public confusion and damaged the reputation of commune, district, and provincial officials.

The statement referenced Provincial Instruction No. 010/24, dated October 16, 2024, which outlines regulations for covering commune development fund procurement activities. According to the directive, only registered and professional journalists, operating under official supervision, are permitted to report on such events.

The commune administration warned that legal action would be taken against any journalist who fails to comply with these regulations. It also accused the journalist of entering the hall without authorization. The statement named Chin Chanratha of KSN TV Online and another individual, alleging that they used "inappropriate and insolent language" toward civil servants and security personnel managing the event. (Type of act: denial of access)

### **24. April 9, 2025, Siem Reap province**

A journalist from Sen Sok News in Siem Reap province reportedly sustained minor injuries after being shot in the shoulder by an unidentified individual while returning home from investigating a deforestation case.

On April 9, 2025, three journalists traveled to O' Village in Khvav Commune, Chi Krong District, to investigate reports of illegal deforestation.

CamboJA was unable to contact the injured journalist directly, as his updated phone number could not be found.

However, a journalist from Thmey Thmey Post, who was with the victim during the incident, told CamboJA on May 6 that around 7 p.m. on April 9, while they were riding motorcycles back from the site, one of the journalists was shot in the shoulder—possibly with a slingshot—causing minor injuries.

The Thmey Thmey journalist explained that they had arrived at the location around 5 p.m. after receiving information from villagers about illegal logging activities. After spending a short time observing the area, they began their journey home when the shooting occurred. He added that the injured journalist immediately filed a complaint with the district police.

On May 7, CamboJA's research team contacted both provincial and district police to verify the incident. The two officials gave conflicting accounts.

Chi Krong District Police Chief Tang Liheng stated that the case had been closed a few days after the incident but did not elaborate on how it was resolved. Meanwhile, Provincial Police Officer Chhann Vuthy claimed that no complaint had been filed by the victim. (Type of act: physical assault)

### **25. March 14, 2025, Phnom Penh**

On March 14, 2025, a female journalist working for a local television station reported being denied entry to a government ministry in Phnom Penh due to her religious attire. In a statement posted on social media, the journalist, who is Muslim, said she was prevented from entering the ministry to cover a news event after a security guard demanded that she remove her headscarf. Despite explaining that the headscarf is a religious requirement in Muslim, the guard refused to let her proceed unless she complied.

The journalist said she attempted to explain the reason for wearing the headscarf, but the guard insisted her remove it before entering," she wrote. "This incident reflects a lack of awareness and understanding about Muslim practices"

The journalist described the experience as discriminatory and called for greater sensitivity and respect for religious diversity, especially within public institutions. (Type of act: Denial of access)

## **26. March 12, 2025, Battambang province**

On March 14, 2025, the Battambang Provincial Court ordered the pre-trial detention of a journalist from Banan Santepheap in Battambang province on charge of incitement following a social media post.

According to a court order issued by investigating judge Nut Somary on March 14, 2025, the journalist, Chheang Phalla, is accused of incitement to disturb social security, allegedly committed through posts on Facebook between October 2024 and March 10, 2025. The charge fall under Article 495 of the Criminal Code.

The specific content of the post that led to the accusation was not disclosed, as it was removed on the same day. However, another journalist, who claimed to have seen the message as shared by authorities, stated that the post appeared to criticize the legal actions taken against Phalla.

A source said the post was made just before Phalla's scheduled court appearance on March 10, 2025. He was arrested on March 12, 2025.

On 10 April 2025, he was released from prison but putting under court supervision with four conditions.

Cheang Phalla has previously faced five defamation lawsuits filed by Banan District Governor Sreng Sokha between October and November 2024. He was first summoned by the court on December 18, 2024, and again on March 10, 2025. (Type of act: Pre-trial detention)

## **27. February 26, 2025, Pursat province**

On February 26, 2025, four journalists from UMA News and Phnom Kravanh Post were arrested by Veal Veng district police while covering a land dispute involving a community forest.

Journalists from UMA told CamboJA that they had received a phone call from a villager reporting land clearance by local authorities, which was affecting a community forest in Veal Veng district. Upon arriving at the site to meet villagers and document the situation, authorities arrived and took them to the district police station for questioning.

Two journalists were detained for two days (April 26 and 27), while the other two were released on the same day as their arrest. One of the detained journalists reported that he and his colleague were not provided with food or water on the first day and were forced to reveal the identities of those who had informed them about the land clearing—something they refused to do. He added that during their detention, police confiscated their mobile phones, ID cards, and other personal documents.

Veal Veng district acting police chief Chea Paris claimed he was unaware of the case. UMA representative Tum Sam An confirmed that three UMA journalists were among those arrested and detained by district police. A monitoring officer from the local rights group ADHOC in Pursat province was also aware of the arrests.

The journalists were accused of using invalid press credentials. However, a UMA representative told CamboJA that the outlet had already applied for 2025 press cards from the Ministry of Information, though they had not yet received them.

The journalists were released on February 28 following the intervention of the Pursat Provincial Court prosecutor and the provincial governor, who sent a letter to the police requesting their release. They were also instructed not to report on their arrest.

Another journalist, who was released on the same day as the arrest, stated that police initially invited them to the district administration office but instead took them to the district police station, where they were detained. He noted that from 10:30 a.m., the time of their arrest, until 6:00 p.m., they were not given any food or water. Meanwhile, a journalist from Phnom Kravanh Post was unreachable. (Type of act: Detention)

## **28. January 31, 2025, Penh Penh**

Two online journalists from San Prum News were questioned on February 6 and 7, 2025 by the Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) after they published a video interviewing the wife of a public servant, who is being held in pre-trial detention on corruption charges.

On January 4, 2025, journalists from the media outlet interviewed the wife and daughter of the official in Kampong Thom province. The interview, which was published on Oudom TV and Kongkan TV but removed, carried their views that he was allegedly charged without evidence.

According to a statement by Kampong Thom provincial court on July 28, 2024, the accused, He Keoun, who was head of the Economic and Urban Development Office of Steung Sen town, was arrested on July 28 on charges of "intentional destruction and embezzlement of a mangrove forest land".

A local media report stated that during the 12-minute interview, Keoun's wife alleged that the ACU had detained her husband for "six months" without resolution, accusing him of involvement in land issues in Tonle Sap's Zone 3 and of receiving \$380,000 from an unidentified individual.

The wife told journalists in the interview that her husband was “just following orders” from the provincial level, but did not mention who gave the orders and what the order was about. She was quoted as saying that if her husband “committed the crime”, their family would “live in a nicer house”.

After the interview was published on January 4, 2025, the journalists, and both the accused’s wife and daughter were summoned for questioning by the ACU about the report which the ACU perceived as “intentionally inciting opposition against the unit”.

On January 30, 2025, a day before the summons were issued, the journalists submitted an apology letter to the ACU, seeking forgiveness from the ACU president. The journalists said that the content of the interview originated from sources and was not exaggerated in an attempt to cause incitement.

One journalist told CamboJA on February 11, 2025 that he was questioned by the ACU for one day and a half on February 6. On the first day, he was first questioned from 3pm to 6pm and from 8.30am to 6pm the next day. Many questions were asked, he said, sharing that it could have been more than 20 questions.

The journalists were allowed to return home after questioning. One of them said even though no action was taken or warning given by the ACU after the questioning, the summons made him concerned about his safety. “I will be more careful to check both parties [sources] before publishing any news from now,” he said. (Type of act: interrogation/ summons)

### **29. January 23, 2025, Phnom Penh**

A female journalist said she received a phone call and text message from a man claiming to represent Cambodian Rice Federation (CRF), asking her to delete an article she wrote about Cambodia’s rice export, titled “EU rejects Cambodian rice”, which was published on January 23, 2025.

On the day of publication, the man asked her to delete the article but she declined, saying that the report was based on documents provided by a reliable source. The journalist said the man asked her to reveal the source who shared the information with her, which she also declined. The journalist added that the man shouted at her during the call and later texted, insisting that the article be deleted.

In a screenshot of the text message shared by the journalist, the man wrote “Please provide the name [of the person] who shared the report. Kindly remove the article”. The text in Khmer language further said: “Stealing someone’s documents for publication [is a] violation of professionalism. Before publishing, why not seek clarification from [CRF]? Are you working to destroy the whole [rice] industry to serve your interest?”

According to the article, the CRF Secretary General had not responded by the time of publication.”

The journalist said she was worried if legal action would be taken against her. (Type of act: Editorial interference)

### **30. January 21, 2025, Phnom Penh**

On January 21, 2025, two publishers/journalists from S.A TVHD Live24h and Cambodiastardailynews.com were arrested by Phnom Penh police and charged with incitement to disrupt social security. The arrest follows an instruction by Phnom Penh Municipal police chief Chuon Narin who accused the journalists of publishing “disinformation” related to online gambling in Phnom Penh.

A day earlier, the Phnom Penh police chief posted a screenshot of a video published by the media outlets on his Facebook and ordered the journalists to reply to the authorities about their report.

In January, both media outlets posted a video, describing that illegal online gambling was operating in central Phnom Penh. The post attached pictures of the Interior Minister, Phnom Penh Governor, Phnom Penh Police Chief, Dangkor District Governor, and of a man whose hands were tied with a wire - allegedly a victim of online scam was removed later. Police denied the report, saying that the video of the victim happened abroad, not in Cambodia. According to the Interior Ministry, the arrest was not a restriction of press freedom. On January 24, 2024, the journalists wrote an apology letter to Prime Minister Hun Manet, accepting their wrongdoing.

However, they were sent to pre-trial detention on charges of incitement to disturb social security on the same day. The journalists were released on 25 July 2025. (Type of act: Pre-trial detention)

### **31. January 17, 2025, Pursat province**

On January 17, 2025, the publisher of LS Luos Seng News was taken in by Veal Veng district police for questioning for at least three hours after he made a live report about villagers in Chrok Preal village, Bror Mouy commune, Veal Veng district, Pursat province protesting against the sacking of their village chief.

The journalist said on January 17, the villagers told him about a protest and asked him to cover it. He said when he arrived at the protest in front of the commune hall and prepared to start the live report, the police came and took him. They asked for his media license and press card.

The police also asked him to reveal who informed him about the protest. The journalist said before he traveled to cover the news, he informed the Pursat governor about his mission.

But on January 21, 2025, the Pursat province administration issued a letter denying that the administration was informed and accused the media outlet of “attacking” the provincial governor. (Type of act: interrogation/summons)

### 32. January 5, 2025, Phnom Penh

A British investigative journalist who has spent five years in Cambodia reporting on deforestation and other environmental issues has been banned from reentering the country. Gerald Flynn, a staff writer for conservation news outlet Mongabay, was denied reentry to Cambodia on Jan. 5 after a short trip to Thailand.

Immigration officials flagged Flynn’s visa as “fraudulent” before his flight from Siem Reap, where he is based. Authorities let him depart but, upon his return, forced him onto a flight back to Bangkok, citing fake visa documents without identifying them and saying he was banned indefinitely from the country. They told him he had been “blacklisted” in November.

Flynn’s work has exposed environmental crimes and human rights abuses in Cambodia, sometimes tied to senior government officials. His recent contribution to a France 24 documentary on deforestation in Cambodia, which the government labeled “fake news,” stands out.

The documentary, aired Nov. 22, came just days before Flynn was blacklisted. On Nov. 23, six environmental activists – two featured in the documentary – were detained in Stung Treng province while investigating an illegal logging operation Flynn had previously reported on.

National Police spokesperson Chhay Kim Khoeun told CamboJA News that all foreigners banned from Cambodia are “either terrorists, spies, or criminals,” expressing frustration when asked about the public sentiment that Flynn’s ban highlights the country’s eroding press freedoms. (Type of act: Denial of entry to country of foreign national from country)

## Report cases of journalists’ rights violations

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