



## **SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN CAMBODIA**

*December 2002*

This briefing paper provides a general overview of the nature and extent of threats facing human rights defenders in Cambodia. It is based on investigations and information compiled by the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO).<sup>1</sup>

Threats to human rights defenders range from surveillance and verbal intimidation, through threats of arbitrary detention and arrest, to physical violence and death threats, all of which jeopardize the safety of human rights defenders and their ability to perform their work. Based on this information, LICADHO advocates concerted action by Cambodian and international human rights groups, foreign governments, and donor agencies to take action on reported threats. The Royal Cambodian Government is urged to prosecute alleged offenders, and thereby comply with its commitments to freedom of association and freedom of expression that protect human rights defenders, as set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified in Cambodia in 1992.

Established in 1992, LICADHO is based in Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, and has offices in 12 provinces. LICADHO's work includes investigating alleged human rights violations and assisting victims to make complaints to the relevant authorities, conducting research and advocacy on human rights issues, and providing human rights education to target groups. LICADHO's work is divided into six offices: Human Rights Education, Monitoring Children's Rights, Women's Rights, Medical, and Project Against Torture.

### **Who is a Human Rights Defender in Cambodia?**

Human rights work is carried out by a wide spectrum of actors, from civil participants such as monks, teachers and students, who may be very active in promoting and defending human rights, to the staff of registered human rights NGOs, whose daily work explicitly addresses rights-based issues. There are also persons employed by NGOs for their services – as translators and drivers for example – who are not directly involved in human rights monitoring but who nevertheless are vulnerable to attack for their association with human rights organizations.

For the sake of brevity, this paper will focus on threats to human rights defenders directly engaged in human rights NGO work, namely those staff members who explicitly address human rights violations as part of their mandate, including staff from UN agencies, national and international NGOs, as well as NGO activists or NGO network members. Nevertheless, it is important to note that much of what is described hereafter does occur in varying degrees throughout civil society in Cambodia. For this paper, the term 'human rights defenders' does not include members of political parties whose political stances may put them at extreme risk,

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Sara Colm of Human Rights Watch Asia, Henrik Alffram and Keat Bophal of UNCOHCHR, and Jason Barber and monitoring staff of LICADHO.

including death, as witnessed in the lead-up to the February 2002 commune elections, when 17 political activists were killed, according to the UNCOHCHR.<sup>2</sup>

## **Human Rights Movement in Cambodia**

Cambodian civil society has struggled to come to terms with the legacy of the brutal 1975-1979 Pol Pot Regime during which an estimated 1.7 million Cambodians perished. Grievous human rights abuses were committed throughout the country, including starvation, forced labor, rape, torture and extra-judicial killings. Although the Khmer Rouge regime ended in 1979, civil war continued until the late 1990s, as different political groups vied for power. The establishment of UNTAC in 1992 created some space for the reemergence of civil society. The handful of international NGOs working in Cambodia during the 1980s were primarily engaged in the provision of relief and humanitarian aid. These were not grassroots level projects, rather were more in line with international donor and governmental projects such as the restoration of infrastructure.

The first Cambodian human rights NGOs, ADHOC and LICADHO, began operating shortly after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in 1991. Gradually, human rights NGOs began raising awareness of the public, monitoring human rights violations as well as taking on more advocacy-related activity. During the last five years national and international NGOs have assumed vital roles including the provision of basic services to victims of human rights violations such as food and shelter and legal defense as well as advocacy, monitoring of governmental institutions and the critique of government policies that do not conform to human rights standards. The number of NGOs in Cambodia continues to grow, with approximately 800 local NGOs and 200 international NGOs registered in 2001.<sup>3</sup>

## **Current Challenges to Civil Society in Cambodia**

Poverty is a stark reality in Cambodia, with an annual per capita gross domestic product of \$257. This factor not only materializes itself in poor health conditions and low average life expectancy, but also underlines many of the challenges facing civil society. The judiciary remains especially weak, and is subject to corruption and influence by the executive branch of the Government. Further, the Government controls most of the content of broadcast media. Military and police forces are responsible a significant number of killings, both political and nonpolitical. These factors and lack of political to address human rights issues, lack of training of government authorities, problems with impunity and weak cooperation between government authorities and human rights groups all contribute to a landscape in which defending the victims of human rights violations can become a dangerous endeavor.

## **Nature and Extent of the Threats to Human Rights Defenders**

Information from LICADHO and other human rights groups reveal a clear pattern of intimidation and threats against human rights defenders in Cambodia, which raises serious concerns about the long-term stability of human rights work.

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<sup>2</sup> Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Human Rights in Cambodia. 2002. "Commune Council Elections 2002", page 4.

<sup>3</sup> ADHOC. 2001. "Human Rights Situation in 2001", page 10.

In the past five years, threats against human rights defenders have included:<sup>4</sup>

- threats to freedom of association and freedom of expression;
- intimidation tactics, such as the collection of thumbprints from people who had filed complaints with human rights NGOs;
- telephone harassment;
- verbal threats, including foul language;<sup>5</sup>
- threatening behavior, such as being followed on motor bikes or by plain clothes persons loitering around the office;
- threat of imprisonment by police and state authorities;
- threat of illegal detention;
- threat of arbitrary or capricious legal action;
- warning letters;
- physical assault;
- arson;
- arbitrary imprisonment and trial; and
- death threats.

The perpetrators of these threats have included, when it has been possible to identify the sources: police, military, commune officials, provincial department officials, municipal department officials, district authorities and district land department officials, district governors and their police authorities, and court officials.<sup>6</sup>

## Surveillance

Most NGOs suspect surveillance from governmental and local police authorities. Precautions are taken to avoid discussing sensitive material on the telephone. When traveling in the provinces, some NGOs report being followed by plain-clothed agents on motorbikes or cars. This feeling of being under close watch was institutionalized after the coup in 1997, when the ruling CPP established an NGO Monitoring Commission which had as its goal the investigation of selected NGOs, particularly those involved in human rights work.

## Verbal Threats

The utterance of verbal threats remains a common strategy of intimidation. For the most part, the perpetrators of these threats are unknown, as in the case of anonymous phone harassment.

Public statements regarding the work of human rights defenders represent another form of verbal threat. In 2000, the Prime Minister used threatening language directed towards human rights defenders on more than one occasion. In December 2000, the Prime Minister accused human rights NGOs of “*hiding terrorists*”. This was followed by a threat to handcuff human rights workers “*without acknowledgement that you are a rights worker*” and a threat to

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<sup>4</sup> For more information see attached Annex of Reported/ Known Threats to/or Attacks on Human Rights Defenders.

<sup>5</sup> Verbal threats may be disguised in language to protect the perpetrator while the message of the threat remains clear. Spoken in Cambodian (Khmer), a verbal threat may assume a variety of meanings depending on the person’s age, status, and colloquial use of language, thus allowing the menacing party to disguise their intentional threat in non-threatening language. Examples are the phrases “*cham neak aing*” which literally means “you wait” and “*cham mul sen*” which means “wait then”, both of which can take on connotations of “just you wait” or “you wait and see [what we are going to do to you].”

<sup>6</sup> *Infra* note 5, at page 20.

imprison human rights workers: “*if you get involved, you’ll be arrested*”. The menacing tone of this language, coming from the highest government official in the nation, establishes the legitimacy of threats to human rights defenders, further endangering the safety of these persons.

### **Physical Assault and Extra-Judicial Killing**

Physical battery remains one of the most common forms of threatening behavior. In 1998, a staff person of COHCHR was beaten by men in civilian clothes while monitoring a demonstration. Most recently, a senior official with the independent forestry monitor, Global Witness, was beaten and kicked to the ground near her office by two masked men. This assault was followed by an email message the next day with the sole word “*QUIT*”. This is believed to be an act of retaliation for Global Witness’ reporting of the practice of illegal logging and its connection to high-level government officials. The same year, an ADHOC activist was shot to death in Kandal province. The activist was representing fourteen families who were threatened with eviction from their land. One perpetrator was arrested and later released by the court in 1999, while rights workers maintain that corruption within the military and police prevented any serious investigation or impartial inquiry.

### **Threat of Illegal Arrest and Detention**

Illegal arrest and detention are pervasive in Cambodia, and human rights defenders have not been immune. In 1998 for example, two LICADHO staff members were arrested, charged and detained for one month after they monitored demonstrations in Sihanoukville against toxic waste dumping. In July 1999, workers from LICADHO and ADHOC narrowly escaped arrest and detention after assisting in a human rights case in Koh Kong province. Similarly, LICADHO staff members who had assisted trafficked garment workers from Vietnam were threatened with arrest in March 2000; one staff member was illegally detained by police but later released. In December 2001, KKKHRA staff in Kompong Thom was temporarily detained and threatened with legal action for investigating the destruction of fishing material. Given the high number of reports of torture in police custody and the deplorable conditions in Cambodia’s prisons, together with the widespread practice of extended pre-trial detention beyond the six-month time limit established by Cambodian law, the threat of arrest can translate into unknown periods of detention in unsafe conditions.<sup>7</sup>

### **Threat of Arbitrary or Capricious Legal Action**

LICADHO and other human rights NGOs who monitor human rights violations are concerned about the use of arbitrary legal action as a means to threaten human rights work. Arbitrary legal action is broader than a threat of illegal arrest and detention, as it may encompass other realms – from criminal law to administrative law. An example of this different kind of threat, non-violent but equally pernicious, is the legal threat brought against LICADHO’s Acting Director in 2000-2001. LICADHO had accompanied police authorities to investigate a case of child abuse, whereupon they discovered a severely abused seven-year old child. The police decided to remove the abused girl from her house, for her safety, and

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<sup>7</sup> Under Cambodian law, pre-trial detention must last no longer than four months. Under UNTAC law, Article 14 states that detention of six months is only allowed in exceptional cases. However, LICADHO investigations have discovered that the authorities have failed to respect this time limit. For more information on Cambodia’s prisons, see “Human Rights and Cambodia’s Prisons: a 2001 LICADHO Report on Prison Conditions” and “Human Rights and Cambodia’s Prisons: The 2001 Health Report”, both published in 2002.

signed an agreement authorizing the NGO to provide emergency medical care and shelter to the girl. A court later granted LICADHO temporary legal custody of the girl. In response to the NGO's filing of a child abuse complaint against the girl's adoptive mother, the adoptive parents filed a complaint alleging that the NGO's Acting Director had abducted and illegally confined the girl. The court charged the adoptive mother with physical assault (of which she was later convicted), and yet also charged the NGO's Acting Director with illegal confinement. Human Rights Watch Asia reported that "*Cambodian and international rights groups expressed concern that the initiation of criminal proceedings appeared to be without foundation and to be aimed at intimidating LICADHO*". The Acting Director of LICADHO later learned that the investigating judge had intended to arrest and detain her, although the illegal confinement charge was ultimately dropped by the court. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002, the perpetrator appealed her conviction and also proceeded to pursue legal action against the Acting Director, who now awaits the outcome of this latest round of legal action. Many human rights leaders in Cambodia have recently expressed deep concern over the use of capricious legal action as a potential means of imprisoning human rights defenders and curtailing their work. As such, it marks a shift in the practice of intimidation, from physical threat to legal threat, and will require a different response strategy from NGOs and their support networks.

### **Impact of Threats on Human Rights Work in Cambodia**

The insidious effects of threats to the physical, mental and legal well-being of human rights defenders can diminish the impact of human rights work. Human rights defenders may be deterred from entering specific geographic areas, they may feel reluctant to assume particular cases or they may be encouraged not to follow-up on certain investigations. This may be the case not only for high-profile, politically-motivated rights abuses, but also non-political cases. For example, the legal action brought against LICADHO in 2001 may have the effect of deterring NGOs from intervening in cases of child abuse or providing shelter for rescued victims.<sup>8</sup>

On a broader level, threats to human rights defenders – especially if they are committed or condoned by government authorities – foster distrust between rights advocates and government officials, and reduce the potential for them to work together to achieve common goals. Although there is room for improvement, Cambodian NGOs pride themselves on the collaborative relationship they have negotiated with some local authorities, which in part helps to explain the success that NGOs have had in monitoring prisons and conducting training seminars for the police, for example.<sup>9</sup> By using a collaborative approach, NGOs can often improve the possibilities for change in behavior or outcome on the part of the state actors. However, when faced with serious threats to human rights defenders, this collaborative relationship is undermined.

### **Impact on Civil Society**

Threats to human rights defenders also have deleterious effects on civil society. They deter human rights victims from exercising their rights to justice, to make complaints to human rights groups and other NGOs, and to seek judicial recourse against the perpetrators. The lack of impartiality in the judiciary contributes to this fear, as does the threat of arrest and the

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<sup>8</sup> See annex for more details.

<sup>9</sup> Colm, S. at page 11.

prospect of detention in one of Cambodia's prisons. Fear and intimidation tactics against rights defenders also contribute to the general public's reluctance to express opinions, criticize government policies or actions, or engage in political dissent. Freedom of association, assembly and expression are necessarily curtailed by these threats, although they may be done so in ways which are not necessarily visible, casting a cloak of fear, suspicion and intolerance over citizen activities. In sum, threats to human rights defenders also violate the fundamental rights of the Cambodian people, constraining freedom of expression and democratic participation.

### **Improving Mechanisms for Protection**

In addition to threatened human rights workers taking basic personal security measures, there is a need for more effective mechanisms of protection. Since many of the threats have stemmed from officials within the government, lobbying the state for greater protection on a national level is not necessarily the most effective. As one anonymous human rights defender puts it: *"In Cambodia, you have to protect yourself because the police will not protect you." In fact, it is the police that you are scared of most of the time.*" For this reason, LICADHO strongly urges the promotion of regional and international networks to lobby more effectively on the issue of protection of human rights defenders. Thus far there has been significant support from regional and international human rights networks, although there is room for expansion and improvement. LICADHO considers the establishment of a regional urgent action network an immediate priority.

The duty of human rights NGOs towards their staff members is another area which remains to be defined. The establishment of an emergency trust fund within each NGO or common trust fund amongst NGOs represents a possible mechanism of protection that needs to be discussed in an NGO forum. Such a trust fund would enable endangered staff members to immediately exit a dangerous situation. However, LICADHO along with other human rights NGOs considers emergency exit to be a last resort option since the evacuation of staff members signals to perpetrators of the threat that their strategy of intimidation has been successful.

### **Relevant Cambodian and International Legal Standards**

The Cambodian Government has made binding domestic and international commitments to the protection of human rights defenders.

The 1991 Paris Peace Accords provide legal protection to human rights defenders, including the freedom of association, assembly and expression. In 1992, Cambodia signed and ratified critical international human rights legislation, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).<sup>10</sup> Article 22 of the ICCPR states: *"Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others"*.<sup>11</sup> Freedom of association was also incorporated into

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<sup>10</sup> The Cambodian Government has further ratified the following international human rights legislation: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

<sup>11</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

domestic law in the 1993 Constitution of Cambodia. Article 42 of the latter states: “*Khmer citizens shall have the right to establish associations and political parties.*”<sup>12</sup>

Human rights NGOs have had legal existence and operation for more than a decade in Cambodia. Without continued special protection and promotion, the concept of human rights, coming into existence at a crucial phase in the rehabilitation of Cambodian society, and evolving into its eventual entrenchment in the Constitution, will remain vulnerable. Threats to human rights defenders not only violate the freedom of association and expression of NGOs, but more generally violate the rights of victims to seek redress for their grievances. Powerful perpetrators may threaten defenders when they investigate specific human rights abuses. Threats to defenders thus become threats to victims and to the promotion of human rights generally. For this reason, the Cambodian Government is urged to support the 1999 United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.<sup>13</sup> In particular, the Government should adhere to Article 9 (1) and (3) that state:

*1. In the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the promotion and protection of human rights as referred to in the present Declaration, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to benefit from an effective remedy and to be protected in the event of the violation of those rights.*

*3. To the same end, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, inter alia:*

*(a) To complain about the policies and actions of individual officials and governmental bodies with regard to violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, by petition or other appropriate means, to competent domestic judicial, administrative or legislative authorities or any other competent authority provided for by the legal system of the State, which should render their decision on the complaint without undue delay;*<sup>14</sup>

## **Recommendations**

LICADHO remains deeply concerned about verbal, physical and arbitrary legal threats to human rights defenders. In light of the severity of these threats, LICADHO urges the following action:

### ***The Royal Government of Cambodia***

- The Government must continue to accept the legitimacy of human rights NGOs and recognize the importance of their work in the development of civil society in Cambodia. This would include removing any obstacles to the operation of human rights NGOs, as well as being more transparent in the process of conducting investigations.

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<sup>12</sup> 1993 Constitution of Cambodia

<sup>13</sup> 1999 United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 9 (1) and (3).

- The Royal Government of Cambodia must take immediate steps to prosecute alleged perpetrators of violence and intimidation towards human rights workers.
- The Government must comply with its domestic and international legal commitments that prohibit the use of fear, force or coercion to prevent or intimidate the work of human rights defenders.
- LICADHO strongly urges the Government to support the 1999 United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In particular, the Government must adhere to Articles 9 and 12 of this Declaration that provide for individual's and organization's right to monitor and protest government activity, as well as require the state to provide protection to individuals and organizations under threat.

#### ***Foreign Governments and Donor Agencies***

- LICADHO considers the greater involvement of foreign governments, embassies and donors in the development of protection mechanisms for human rights defenders in Cambodia to be essential.
- In the case of arbitrary or capricious legal action against human rights defenders, governments and donors should inform the Cambodian government of their knowledge of the use of legal means to threaten human rights workers. This could include encouraging the Government to remove legal obstacles to human rights work, or alternatively might include supporting legal assistance to the defender in question.

#### ***Cambodian Human Rights NGOs***

- LICADHO invites Cambodian human rights NGOs to dialogues and fosters collaboration on the establishment of both short and long-term protection mechanisms. This includes, but is not limited to, advocacy and legal protection, the establishment of emergency trust funds and exit procedures, and participation in a regional urgent action response network.
- The creation of a regional urgent action response network is highly recommended. Such a network would take immediate steps to publicize a threat, advocate for proper action by Cambodian authorities against alleged perpetrators, as well as to offer a plan of protection and evacuation for the defender in question if necessary.
- Human rights defenders in Cambodia must make concerted efforts to document all threats to their personal and professional security, and to communicate these threats for the greater protection of civil society in Cambodia.
- Cambodian human rights NGOs should commit to the promotion of the 1999 United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

### List of Relevant Abbreviations

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| ADHOC    | Cambodian Association for Human Rights and Development                               |
| CDP      | Cambodian Defenders Project  |
| CFF      | Cambodian Freedom Fighters   |
| CHRAC    | Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee  |
| COHCHR   | Cambodian Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights                           |
| COMFREL  | Committee for Fair and Free Elections  |
| CPP      | Cambodian People's Party   |
| FUNCUPEC | National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia |
| KKKHRA   | Khmer Kampuchea Krom Human Rights Association  |
| KRC      | Khmer Resource Center  |
| LICADHO  | Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights                       |
| UNHCR    | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  |
| UNTAC    | United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia                                    |

### *Annex of Reported/Known Threats to/or Attacks on, Human Rights Defenders in Cambodia in the Last Five Years, 1997-2002<sup>15</sup>*

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Month</b> | <b>Event</b>   |
|-------------|--------------|--|
| 1997        | August       | Investigators of the Cambodian Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (COHCHR) were intimidated when an AK47 was fired above their heads while investigating a gravesite. Human Rights Watch Asia also reported that investigators later heard government soldiers deciding whether or not to kill them, over radio traffic. |
| 1997        | October      | The ruling Cambodian People's Party established an NGO Monitoring Commission that had as its goal the investigation of selected NGOs, particularly those with human rights mandates.   |
| 1998        | February     | Staff members from ADHOC, Vigilance, LICADHO and KRC were followed by soldiers while they investigated a human rights case in Tboung Khmum district, Kompong Cham province.  |
| 1998        | February     | Militaries filed a lawsuit against the CHRAC in relation to its intervention in a case of a threatened human rights worker in Kampong Cham. The division addressed its complaint to the Supreme Court and the National Assembly, demanding a compensation of US\$ 70,000 on charges of defamation.                                     |
| 1998        | April        | A Cambodian staff person of COHCHR was assaulted by government security forces while monitoring a demonstration. Staff had to be hospitalized.   |

<sup>15</sup> Information gathered from: Human Rights Watch Global Reports, 1997-2001; ADHOC Annual Report 2001; and personal interviews with human rights workers.

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| <b>1998</b> | September | Human rights workers, both international and Cambodian, were harassed by government security officials while attempting to monitor post-election government demonstrations or assist the wounded.  |
| <b>1998</b> | December  | Two LICADHO staff members, Kim Sen and Meas Minear, were arrested, charged and detained for one month after they monitored demonstrations in Sihanoukville against toxic dumping.  |
| <b>1998</b> | December  | ADHOC activist, Pournng Tong, was killed in Kandal province. The murder was most likely related to a long-standing land dispute case that the victim and fourteen families, who were workers at a stone grinding company, had with the company. The victim was representing the families in the dispute in pursuing the case in court.   |
| <b>1998</b> | December  | Staff member of COHCHR was attacked by four members of Royal Gendarmerie while he was riding his motorbike in Phnom Penh. The Royal Gendarmerie threatened to kill the staff member, then subsequently punched him in the face, stole his motorbike, confined him in their car and drove away. In the car, the staff member had his wallet, phone, radio, money and other belongings confiscated. The staff member then managed to jump out of the car, running towards a security guard of a hotel on a main street in the city. The staff member later recovered all of his belongings after a series of negotiations between Royal Gendarmerie and the COHCHR office. |
| <b>1999</b> | January   | Representatives of Cambodian human rights organizations in seven provinces were intimidated by government authorities, and one NGO worker was threatened with arrest during a campaign to gather signatures from Cambodians requesting the UN to establish an international tribunal for the Khmer Rouge.  |
| <b>1999</b> | July      | After assisting a human rights case, workers from LICADHO and ADHOC were threatened with arrest in Koh Kong province. They averted being arrested when COHCHR and CHRAC intervened.  |
| <b>1999</b> | July      | Two LICADHO employees were brought to trial following their arrest in 1998 when they had been monitoring demonstrations in Sihanoukville. Although they were acquitted, UN and international observers said that they should never have been tried because of a lack of evidence and procedural errors, Human Rights Watch reported.   |
| <b>1999</b> | September | Military Region II sent an official threat letter to the Kompong Cham provincial office of COHCHR and local human rights NGOs in the province, accusing a member of a human rights organization of inciting people to complain against the military unit for their handling of a land dispute in Tboung Khmum district.  |

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| 2000 | March     | After assisting garment workers who had been trafficked to Cambodia from Vietnam, LICADHO staff were threatened with arrest. One staff member was briefly detained by police.  |
| 2000 | March     | In Koh Kong province, ADHOC staff members were threatened with arrest after their intervention in a trafficking case. Human Rights Watch Asia reported that “a woman who had sold her daughter brought charges of physical assault against ADHOC’s provincial coordinator. The woman later withdrew her complaint and admitted that she had been pressured by police to file the complaint.” <sup>16</sup> |
| 2000 | June      | Two staff members of COHCHR were harassed and verbally threatened after monitoring a workers’ demonstration in Russei Keo district, Phnom Penh, and after attempting to request information from the officer of the Royal Gendarmerie who appeared to be in command of the force present   |
| 2000 | August    | When members of CHRAC and UN staff were investigating extra judicial executions in Kratie province in 2000, several human rights defenders were subjected to intimidation from local authorities, including being followed and receiving threats from military personnel.  |
| 2000 | September | A district chief in the province of Kampot closed down a voter education meeting conducted by the COMFREL, an election monitoring group. The district chief cited the organization’s lack of written permission from the governor to convene the meeting as the cause of the action.   |
| 2000 | October   | When UN human rights workers intervened after a soldier threatened to shoot a parliamentarian of the opposition party, Sam Rainsy Party, a soldier threatened at gun point the UN workers.   |
| 2000 | December  | The Prime Minister accused human rights NGOs of fostering terrorism by allegedly providing shelter and assistance to terrorist groups, following the November 2000 attack by the CFF in Phnom Penh. The Prime Minister used threatening language to warn NGO workers that they were ‘not above arrest’. <sup>17</sup>  |
| 2001 | January   | When Global Witness, an officially-mandated forestry watchdog organization, released a report on illegal logging prior to an international donor meeting, the Prime Minister threatened to expel   |

<sup>16</sup> 2002. Human Rights Watch. “World Report: Events of 2001”, page 204.

<sup>17</sup> Cambodia Daily. 2000. [Unofficial Translation] “Hun Sen in a speech in Pursat province”, December 5. See also, Cambodian Daily. 2000. “Don’t Hide CFF, PM Warns”, by Ham Samnang, December 6; Evening News. 2000. “Samdech Prime Minister Appeals to NGOs not to Protect Terrorists”, Damneung Pel Lngeach, Vol.5, #680; Rasmei Kampuchea Daily. 2000. “Hun Sen Warns the Human Rights Workers not to Hide Terrorists”, Thursday, December 7; Voice of Khmer Youth. 2000. “Hun Sen Threatens to Handcuff Human Rights Workers and President of Opposition Party”, December 6; Associated Press. 2000. “Hun Sen Warns Rights Groups As Arrests Continue”, December 5.

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|             |           | the group from Cambodia. Following pressure from donors, he did not carry through on this threat.  |
| <b>2001</b> | January   | Two Global Witness officials were summoned by the Kandal provincial court on the allegation of infringement of individual rights. They were told by the prosecutor that their inspection of a plywood factory could lead them to being charged under Article 57 of UNTAC law, which relates to infringement of individual rights. The trespassing charges stem from a surprise inspection of a plywood factory. Global Witness officials were not allowed entry and were detained by security guards for six hours. After officials from Forestry and Wildlife Department arrived, Global Witness officials were allowed into the factory where they discovered illegal, unstamped logs both inside and outside the factory compound.  |
| <b>2001</b> | March     | An unidentified perpetrator kicked violently the gate of the Phnom Penh head office of Vigilance, a Cambodian human rights NGO and woke up three staff sleeping in the building. Failing to get inside the building, the man tore down the signboard and stamped on it, and then waited in a car, along with another unidentified man.   |
| <b>2001</b> | March     | Leading staff member of CDP, an organization that provides legal aid assistance to vulnerable persons, was followed and photographed by an unidentified man.   |
| <b>2001</b> | May       | The Phnom Penh Municipal Court filed a charge of illegal confinement against LICADHO's Acting Director. The case related to a police rescue of a young child abuse victim, whom the police handed over to LICADHO's temporary care. The victim's adoptive parents filed a complaint of illegal confinement against LICADHO, for providing shelter and medical care to the child. Despite the fact that it was the police who had removed the child from the adoptive parents, one of whom was prosecuted and subsequently convicted of child abuse, the court accepted the parent's complaint and filed charges against LICADHO's Acting Director. The case was later dropped. There was concern from Cambodian and international organizations that what lay underneath this legal threat was an intimidation campaign aimed at curtailing the activities of LICADHO. |
| <b>2001</b> | September | LICADHO staff member investigating human trafficking case was followed on at least four occasions, outside victim's residence, LICADHO office, and the investigator's own residence.   |
| <b>2001</b> | December  | Detention and intimidation against staff members of KKKHRA by Kampong Thom provincial authorities, while conducting an investigation into huge destruction of people's fishing material.   |
| <b>2002</b> | March     | Staff member of UNHCR in Mondulkiri province received threats from Cambodian police and Vietnamese persons over her  |

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|                          | <p>intervention on behalf of asylum seekers. A crowd of 500 Vietnamese persons aggressively converged on the houses of asylum seekers in the site of UNHCR in Mondulkiri. The Cambodian police physically pushed her out of the way when she attempted to stop the police from targeting the house of an indigenous language translator.</p>   |
| <p><b>2002</b> March</p> | <p>A boat driver who transported refugees in an informal work relationship with UNHCR was later arrested on charges of human trafficking. The driver, while not a permanent staff member, nor having a formal work contract with UNHCR, was nonetheless targeted after providing transportation for ethnic minority refugees, whom UNHCR had been in the process of resettling. Driver was released on August 12 after being in pre-trial detention for four months.</p> |
| <p><b>2002</b> April</p> | <p>UNHCR camp in Mondulkiri was looted and burned down by local Cambodian police and Vietnamese officials, about one hour after 18 government trucks left the site with approximately 550 Montagnard refugees headed for Phnom Penh. The site was torched and UN staff had to evacuate. An estimated 50% of the site was destroyed.</p>  |
| <p><b>2002</b> April</p> | <p>A senior official with the independent forestry monitor Global Witness was beaten and kicked to the ground near her office and then sent a threatening e-mail message the following day instructing her to “QUIT”. Global Witness considered the attack as an intimidation tactic from logging interests who are threatened by their investigations that revealed the ongoing practice of illegal logging.</p>  |