

Quarterly Monitoring on Incidents Against Journalists in Cambodia

13
**Incidents
Recorded**

Arrest
(5 cases)

Intimidation
(7 cases)

Others
(1 case)



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Between January and March 2026, CCIM monitors and documents incidents against journalists in the country. This legal support and monitoring are critically important as harassment against journalists continues to take place. These incidents occurred in the course of journalistic reporting and resulted in arrests, detentions, intimidation, physical threat, forced content removal, and criminal prosecution. The documented cases demonstrate a pattern of harassment and legal pressure against journalists reporting on online scamming, gambling operations, and sensitive border issues. These incidents illustrate a shrinking space for press freedom, especially for journalists investigating matters involving security forces, state linked economic interests, or border related concerns.

CCIM recorded 13 incidents

These incidents affected 15 individual journalists and citizen journalists. Concerns related to border tensions and the dissemination of articles and videos on sensitive border issues constituted the most frequently recorded incidents during this reporting period. A total of 5 cases were related to reporting on border issues, while 3 incidents involved journalists livestreaming or reporting on online scamming activities.

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Key incidents Highlight

Case one: Arrest and Pre-Trial Detention of Hem Vanna (Banteay Meanchey)

- Journalist: Hem Vanna, Editor, HHVNN TV Online
- Date of arrest: 3 February 2026
- Incident: Arrested by Poipet military police after publishing a video documenting alleged violence against foreign nationals believed to be trafficking victims inside a suspected scam compound near a military police facility.
- Legal status:
Charged with incitement to commit a felony (Article 495)
Charged with intercepting or recording private conversations (Article 301)

On 18 February 2026, the Banteay Meanchey Provincial Court refused bail, and Mr. Vanna remains on trial.

- Concerns:
Arrest reportedly conducted without a warrant
Charges appear directly linked to investigative reporting

Source: <https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=497&khmer>



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Case 2: Detention of Investigative Reporter Mech Dara (Koh Kong)

- Journalist: Mech Dara, Investigative Reporter
- Date: 11 February 2026
- Incident: Detained for nearly one hour while reporting on an alleged raid at a scam compound in Dara Sakor. Authorities confiscated his phone, forced deletion of photos, and warned him not to contact others.
- Legal context:
Previously charged under Articles 494 and 495
Remains on bail from earlier incitement charges
- Concerns:
Use of intimidation and censorship without formal procedure
Ongoing legal vulnerability linked to prior reporting
- Source: <https://kiripost.com/stories/detained-journalist-released-after-deleting-photos-of-suspected-scam-centre-raid-in-dara-sakor>

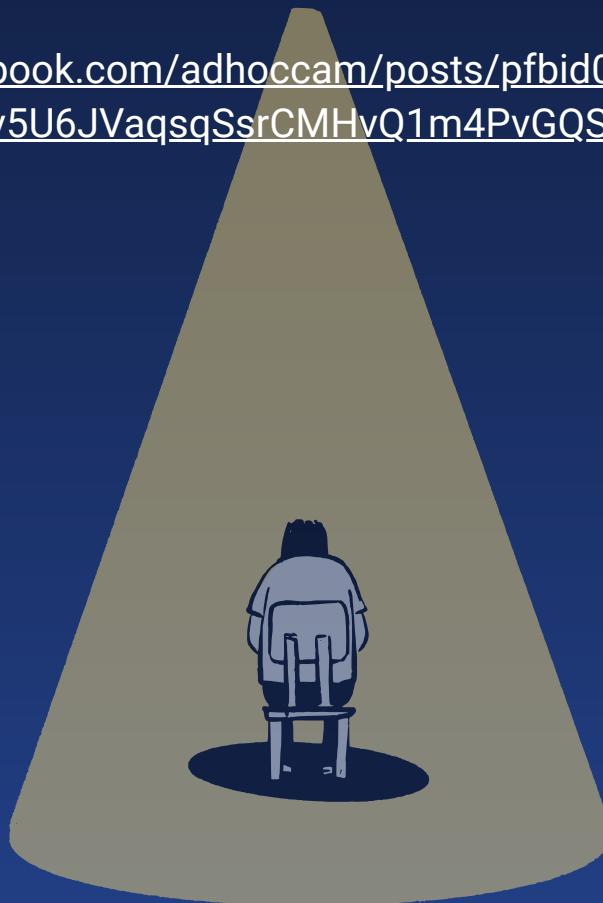


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Case 3: Arrest of Prom Sophai and Seang Bunsong (Takeo Province)

- Journalists: Prom Sophai, Reporter, Koh Santepheap/Penh Chet Media
Seang Bunsong, Editor, Sunday News
- Date: 12–13 February 2026
- Incident: Arrested at separate locations after publishing a report alleging the existence of online gambling sites and corruption involving local authorities.
- Outcome:
Detained for two days
Released after issuing an apology and agreeing to correct the report
- Concerns:
Charges framed as “false information causing fear among investors”
- Source: ADHOC
(<https://www.facebook.com/adhoccam/posts/pfbid02WdUxdzmWRdzPBRivxR3EujQaEy8jrxICQv5U6JVaqsqSsrCMHvQ1m4PvGQsrSVHal>)



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Case Four: Arrest of Luot Sophal (Oddar Meanchey Province)

- Journalist: Luot Sophal, Reporter
- Date: Arrested 13 February 2026
- Incident: Reported that frontline troops faced water shortages. Following publication, ordered to delete content, issued a public apology and still placed in temporary detention.
- Charges: Demoralizing the army & Inciting the commission of crimes
- Concerns:
 - Prosecution pursued despite compliance with authorities
 - Use of criminal law to suppress reporting on military conditions
- Source: <https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=500&english>



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Key incidents Highlight

Case Five: Sentencing of Phon Sopheap and Pheap Pheara (Siem Reap)

- Journalists: Mr. Phon Sopheap and Mr. Pheap Pheara
- Date of sentencing: 17 December 2025 (continuing impact in 2026)
- Incident: Convicted under Article 445 for allegedly providing information to a foreign state that could harm national defense.
- Sentence: 14 years' imprisonment each
Currently detained in Siem Reap Provincial Prison
- Concerns:
Severe penalties near the legal maximum
Broad interpretation of national security articles against journalists
- Source: <https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=501&khmer>



To strengthen journalist safety, CCIM will continue monitoring violations against journalists and media workers and offer legal assistance to those facing risks. You can report incidents or request legal support through our hotline at **060 50 50 50**