



Registered in British Columbia, LICADHO Canada provides critical services to communities on the front lines of the land-grabbing crisis in Cambodia. We do so in meaningful collaboration with LICADHO – *Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights*.

October 2011

Cambodia’s Legislative Assault on Expression

Twenty years after the Paris Peace Accords, Cambodia’s democratic space is disappearing. In a new report, “[The Delusion of Progress: Cambodia’s Legislative Assault on Expressive Rights](#),” LICADHO analyzes five key laws proposed or enacted since 2008: the Penal Code, the Anti-Corruption Law, the Law on Associations and NGOs, the Law on Peaceful Assembly, and the Law on Unions of Enterprises.

“Overall, the analysis reveals several disturbing trends: Legislation is littered with improper restrictions on freedom of expression, provisions are misapplied, and vast sections are deliberately drafted to be used as weapons against those who speak out against the political and financial elite. In other words, the idea that Cambodia’s new laws represent progress is simply a delusion.”

Land Rights NGOs Threatened; One Suspended

In recent months, the Cambodian government has threatened four organisations working on land issues. One of these groups – Salmakum Teang Tnaut (STT) - was subsequently suspended from August until end of the year.

Civil society responded in force: “We condemn the suspension of STT in the strongest possible terms. The suspension of STT is completely arbitrary and a violation of the constitutional right to freedom of expression and association, and an assault on human rights defenders. [...] We regard this act to silence STT as an act of oppression against us all.” -[Media statement](#) signed by 130 civil society groups and private sector under the slogan “We Are All STT”.

[STT](#) remains suspended.

Assaults on Boeung Kak Lake Families Continue

In August 2011, the World Bank announced it had frozen all funds to the government until a solution was found for remaining Boeung Kak families. Less than one week later, the Prime Minister announced that 12.44 hectares would be given to the remaining 779 families. (More than 3000 families had already been coerced off their land since 2007.)

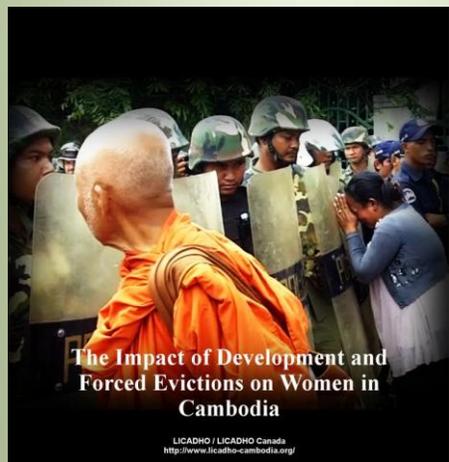
Despite the announcement, the Phnom Penh Municipality and the company have continued their intimidation campaign against the community. On September 16, for example, police in riot gear brutally beat a Boeung Kak Lake activist as he attempted to lead residents in protesting the unannounced demolition of homes. Watch these two new shocking videos from LICADHO and LICADHO Canada

- [Boeung Kak Lake Activist Savagely Beaten \[...\]](#)
- [The Impact of “Development” and Forced Eviction on Women in Cambodia](#)



Ottawa: Khmer-Canadian rally on the Anniversary of Paris Peace Accords

During a forced eviction, a dispossessed Cambodian yelled, “Why are you [police] helping thieves? You are criminals worse than Pol Pot!” To say this is now a CRIME in Cambodia. Read more about the ‘language of a crime’ [here](#).



The Impact of Development and Forced Evictions on Women in Cambodia

LICADHO / LICADHO Canada
<http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/>

New LICADHO/LC video

The League of Boeung Kak Women

As the community rebuilds the homes destroyed in and since September, the female group of representatives - now known as the League of Boeung Kak Women Struggling for Housing Rights - continues to lobby for their rights and justice.

In October, after Boeung Kak representatives filed a formal court complaint against the Municipality, six community activists received court summons in relation to a separate criminal complaint. A few days later, two of the six received another summons on yet another case.

Worried that they would soon be arrested, a group from the community wrote and recorded eight songs on a CD called "Development Separates Families".

"Mom goes to protest, the children cry and sleep on the ground. Mom carries you in her arms, and caresses you with her tears. Mom's mind is so stifled because we need a home"
– Song from Boeung Kak CD, a message from an activist mother to her children.

Venerable Sovath – the Travelling Monk

Venerable Sovath has been on the move since earlier in the year when religious authorities arbitrarily banned him from all Phnom Penh and Siem Reap province pagodas. Venerable Sovath says "the pagoda is in our hearts" and that "the Buddha did not have a pagoda. He went where the suffering was."

The Venerable seeks to follow Buddha's example and continues to journey around the country in support of communities threatened with land grabbing and forced evictions. In September, Venerable Sovath was invited to Dublin, Ireland to attend Front Line Defenders Human Rights Defenders Forum. And he just returned from a month in Melbourne; sponsored by Australian Khmers.

Venerable Sovath and Boeung Kak Lake Continue to Unite

Venerable Sovath and Boeung Kak representatives share a similar story. They understand the horrific consequences of forced eviction, threats, restriction of movement, and attempts to silence expression. And as much as the Boeung Kak representatives respect Venerable Sovath, he too respects the strength and determination the group shows to their community. They continue to support and advocate for one another.

You Can Help Too!

- ✚ **Educate** yourself and others about Cambodia's current free fall from democracy.
- ✚ **Advocate** on behalf of Cambodians, including signing petitions and joint letters.
- ✚ **Donate** to groups that work directly with people to provide legal, medical, advocacy, protection, humanitarian and monitoring support.

[DONATE TODAY](#)

www.licadho-cambodia.org

www.licadhocanada.com



One of the houses being rebuilt by the Boeung Kak community



Venerable Sovath in a Melbourne bird sanctuary



Venerable Sovath listens to Boeung Kak representatives

Other recommended video viewing:

- [The Cause of Progress - teaser](#)

