

Year of Extremes February 2012

Borei Keila's Violent Eviction, January 3, 2012

In early 2003, Phnom Penh's Borei Keila settlement became a test case for on-site relocation of Cambodia's urban poor. At least 1,770 families lived on the prime land near the city centre which authorities wanted to develop.

As part of a compromise, the parties came to a 'land-sharing' agreement. The arrangement stated that the construction corporation Phan Imex would build 10 buildings to host all of Borei Keila residents in exchange for being allowed to commercially develop the remaining 2.6 hectares.

In 2010, Phan Imex unilaterally reneged on the agreement, having only constructed eight buildings, leaving roughly 300 Borei Keila families excluded from the original agreement. On January 3, 2012 Phan Imex proceeded to destroy these homes with the help of armed state forces. Many were injured, nine were arrested.



Evicting Borei Keila

Watch the shocking eviction video:
[BROKEN PROMISES](#)

Dey Krahorm 3-year Memorial of Violent Eviction

On January 24, 2012 in a show of solidarity, four communities joined together in front of Dey Krahorm's stolen land holding a 50 meter banner depicting the community's struggle prior and during eviction, with a call to stop evictions.

The communities held a press conference and then marched to the National Assembly to submit a multi-community petition. Dey Krahorm's memorial annually draws a large crowd of supporters, including media and NGOs who gather to remember the brutal assault on Dey Krahorm community [January 24, 2009](#).

Alarming Increase in the Use of Lethal Force

On January 26, 2012 LICADHO released a [press statement](#) stating that "Cambodia's land-grabbing crisis has taken a disturbingly violent turn in the last two months, with at least five incidents involving armed forces opening fire during protests. A total of 19 residents were injured at the protests, including seven from gunfire.

"Each of the incidents has been documented in video footage or photographs, but the perpetrators have to this day uniformly escaped punishment, exemplifying Cambodia's notorious system of impunity."

BK and BKL Women Attacked and Arrested

On February 1, 2012 evicted Borei Keila residents and former Boeung Kak Lake residents found themselves protesting together in front of City Hall. When mixed police forces arrived to disperse them, some women removed their clothes in protest and to prevent attack. Even so, police cracked down with violence, arresting 5 women from Borei Keila and 1 woman from Boeung Kak Lake. Watch the shocking [video](#).

Other recommended videos:

- [Military Shoot at Land Protesters in North-eastern Cambodia](#)



50 meter banner on the edge of DK land



Defying conservative cultural roles, BK and BKL women bare all in protest.

Venerable Monk Sovath Speaks Out in Canada

In February 2012 [Venerable Loun Sovath](#) was invited to Montreal, Quebec by the large Khmer community that resides there. During his 6-week stay he will perform Buddhist ceremonies and advocate for land rights in Cambodia.

Venerable Sovath has been a loud advocate for victims of land-grabbing since 2009 when his own community was shot at by police during a land dispute. Since that time he travels across Cambodia reaching out to threatened communities and documenting their stories through videos, songs and poems.

Venerable Sovath's activism has drawn the [ire of religious authorities](#) who have banned him from all pagodas in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh provinces, and threatened him with expulsion from the monkhood, criminal charges, and even violence.

Community Voices Unite

Forty six participants from 11 rural and urban communities/groups attended their own 3-day workshop in Siem Reap at the end of December 2011 with the purpose of using music and song to advocate for their communities. The workshop was led by Chan Vichet from Dey Krahorn, LC, and Messenger Band, a Cambodian garment worker girl band.

Thirty five songs were written and shared between communities. Songs contain powerful lyrics. Some remember specific incidents, some recall the community's story and others are a call to action/for responsibilities. Sixteen songs were recorded in February and will be made available to the public in March 2012 on a multi-community solidarity CD. Stay tuned!

*“Khmer citizens need to stand up
to protect our rights for a better existence.*

*Fight to get the land that we lost
for our children to live on in the future.”*

-Excerpt from 'Excavator Destroys My Home' song

You Can Help Too!

Educate, advocate and/or donate. Those are the best ways to support Cambodians struggling for rights and justice at this time.

LC has a super cool list of [partners](#); donate to your area of interest (unions, students groups, communities, HR groups/LICADHO), sign up for their/our newsletters, participate in petitions, 'Like' [LICADHO's Facebook](#) page, follow us on [Twitter](#), spread the word back at your office, write us a letter, visit LC's website, watch our [videos](#).

**There is so much YOU can do to let
Cambodia know you are paying attention.**

www.licadho-cambodia.org

www.licadhocanada.com



Venerable Sovath arrives in Montreal



Singing about land rights on the bus



Recording in the studio

