

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

CAMBODIA SENDING OUT AN S.O.S.

November/December 2012

In the past few years, Cambodia's façade of democracy has steadily crumbled, exposing a steady and worrisome rise in land grabs, human rights violations and suppressions of basic rights and freedoms. LICADHO highlighted 2012 as one of the worst years on records in terms of attacks and threats against human rights defenders.

Having lost faith in their government and without access to an independent judiciary, communities are more and more frequently calling out to the international governments for intervention. These pleas have been largely met by silence; a silence most disturbing from the Embassies of foreign governments providing annual bi-lateral aid to the Cambodian autocracy.

Riot Police 'Protect' American Embassy from Mothers and Children

Two days mid-November, Boeung Kak and Borei Keila residents gathered outside the American Embassy calling for Obama, who was arriving the following week, to help secure the release of their two female representatives in pre-trial detention on trumped-up charges.

Both days at dusk, armed riot police positioned themselves between the Embassy and the peaceful crowd of mainly women, elders and children. A police truck loudspeaker announced that armed police were there to protect the Embassy and told the crowd they had 15 minutes to disperse.

S.O.S

When families living around the Phnom Penh airport were told they would be evicted in order to make a new road to accommodate Obama's envoy arriving late November for the ASEAN summit, some families responded by painting large S.O.S. signs on their rooftops next to poster sized photos of Obama. These same [families were detained](#) until they agreed to remove the signs from their rooftops.

The day after the unlawful detention, the airport families joined Borei Keila and Boeung Kak Lake in S.O.S solidarity actions in Boeung Kak Lake.

Sounds of Solidarity

"Every action has an equal and opposite reaction." Indeed. As LC documents the increase of crackdowns against civil society groups, we've been simultaneously documenting continued increase of solidarity between communities, farmers, unions and environmentalists who together are utilizing creative and visible forms of demonstration and civil disobedience.

The proof of visibility has been through a spike of video footage requests received by LICADHO and LC alongside a growing number of international media articles and broadcasts on Cambodia's precarious human rights environment.



Residents from Thmor Kol village near airport write messages on their rooftops (LICADHO photo)



Anti-riot police disperse BK and BKL residents from the front of US Embassy. Residents had gathered there to call for help after bail was again denied for Tim Sakmony and Yorm Bopha at bail appeal trial.

Days in pre-trial detention as of Dec. 10

Tim Sakmony: 98 days

Yorm Bopha: 97 days



Solidarity action with three communities on what used to be Boeung Kak Lake (now sand).

Early next year, LC will produce a new video which will reveal the growing resilience and remarkable, creative actions from Cambodian civil society. This video will be an update of the original '[Community Resistance to Forced Eviction](#)' (2011).

Other videos worth watching:

- Al Jazeera 101 East: [No Place Like Home](#)
- ABC Foreign Correspondent: [We Will Not Be Moved](#)

International Human Rights Day 2012

During December 8-10, nearly 62,000 Cambodian people celebrated IHRD through 198 events across 23 provinces and under the common banner of “We all need justice and freedom!”. This year is the largest participation of IHRD in Cambodia on record.

Despite that IHRD is recognized as a public holiday in Cambodia, authorities continued its trend of intimidation and restriction of movement at various locations in both urban and rural areas.

LICADHO marked IHRD by releasing its newest report called '[Threats and Attacks against Human Rights Defenders in Cambodia: 2010-2012](#)'.

“The climate for human rights defenders (HRDs) in Cambodia has soured dramatically since 2009, creating the country’s worst human rights environment in more than a decade [...]” – [LICADHO media statement](#)

International Solidarity

Under Amnesty International, groups of citizens from New Zealand, South Korea, Germany, and France have recently shown their support and solidarity through role plays, post card petitions, banners, demonstrations and songs.

The banners and post card petitions were hung from trees and carried in traditional pole buckets to join IHRD events across Phnom Penh, and will be part of a joint petition that will be submitted to the National Assembly on December 14.

Thank you to all of Cambodia’s international friends! All together, we are making a difference!

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 super cool 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 me a letter, visit LC’s website, watch our [videos](#).

There is so much YOU can do to show Cambodia that you are paying attention.

www.licadho-cambodia.org www.licadhocanada.com



Nov. 2012: ABC Foreign Correspondent '[We Will Not Be Moved](#)'. Video footage contributions from LICADHO/LC.



LICADHO’s newest [report](#)



Post card petitions hanging from homemade Pho trees during IHRD celebrations.

