

-Humanitarian Law RULES!

Center for the Study of Humanitarian Law

Newsletter

November 2017

Human Rights and Environment: Cambodia

The concept of Environmental Rights has been indicated in the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Declaration, 1972). There is no universal definition; however, Environmental Rights are defined as the right to the healthy living standard and sanitary condition, safe drinking water and food, environmental justice or remedies, environmental information or education, and participation in environmental law or policies adoption process, etc.¹

The population growth and pursuit of economic development require massive amount of natural resources at the expense of the environment. As a result, alarming environmental issues are witnessed across the world including air, land, and water pollution, climate change, global warming, etc. The threat to the environment likewise undermines the realization of human rights in many aspects in light of the close historical relationship between human and Mother Nature.

In the case of Cambodia, massive deforestation is playing a crucial role in the cause of climate change. Notwithstanding the bans, the deforestation continued. According to Satellite data released by Global Forest Watch in 2015, Cambodia had lost more than 1.75 million hectares of forest since 2001.² According to the Environmental Performance Index for 2016, Cambodia ranked poorly, at 146 out of 180 countries.³ Last year, almost all of Cambodia's provinces, vulnerable communities were left without access to drinking water, and many poor farmers lost crops and livestock because of drought.⁴

Article 59 of Cambodian Constitutional law stipulated that "The State shall preserve and protect the environment and the balance of natural resources..." In response, the Cambodian Government has established the Ministry of Environment in 1993, following by the 1996 Law on the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Management, Sub-Decree on the Environmental Impacts Assessment (1999), Sub-Decree on Solid Waste Management (1999), Sub-Decree on Water Pollution Control (1999) and Sub-Decree on the Control on Air and Noise Pollution (2000).

In line with the existing law, the implementation and enforcement is of great importance. Environmental policies should also be adopted taking into account the interests of current and future generation of Cambodia. In order to achieve the realization of environmental rights, it requires inclusive participation of individuals, communities, private institutions, and other relevant stakeholders toward protection of environment and sustainable development of Cambodia.

¹ The Nautilus Institute, *Human Rights & the Environment: Conflicts and Norms in a Globalizing World*, Edited by Lyuba Zarsky, 2002.

² Southeast Asia Glob, *How Cambodia's record deforestation is driving crippling drought*, Euan Black, June. 7, 2017, available at <http://sea-globe.com/deforestation-drought-cambodia/>, accessed Nov. 20, 2017

³ Yale Centre for Environmental Law and Policy 2016.

http://epi.yale.edu/sites/default/files/2016EPI_Full_Report_opt.pdf

⁴ *Supra note 3*

LIBRARY HOURS

November 2017

Mon to Fri: 8.45am – 5.30pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

Documentary Series on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law

Movie: *Eyes in the Sky* (2016)

Date: Monday, November 27, 2017, 6pm to 8:30pm

Venue: Center for the Study of Humanitarian Law (CSHL)

RESEARCH AT THE LIBRARY

Did you know that you can access online databases, Westlaw International and Westlaw UK, at the library? These databases give you access to 1000s of documents that will help you with your research. And if you need help using them, we're more than happy to assist!

