

-Humanitarian Law RULES!-

Center for the Study of Humanitarian Law
Newsletter

July 2017

Human Rights Defenders in Cambodia

Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) play a significant role not only to monitor the implementation and enjoyment of human rights of all individuals, but also to contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights, rule of law and democracy in the country. The United Nations (UN) Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, though not a legally binding instrument, was adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly to reaffirm the essential role of HRDs and set out legal protections to which HRDs are entitled. Nonetheless, HRDs just as all individuals are entitled to fundamental human rights protection and guarantees provided under international human rights law.

HRDs are defined as people who, individually or in group, act to eliminate human rights violations and to protect and promote fundamental rights and freedoms of everyone. People that can be categorized as HRDs include, but not limited to, human rights professionals, community representatives, journalists, international or local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), associations, trade unions, activists, students and teachers.

For HRDs to perform their work effectively, it is important that their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and right to form, join and participate in NGOs and associations are guaranteed and respected. However, it is common that HRDs around the world face with various challenges, including restriction on exercising their rights and freedom, intimidation, threat, violence, harassment, discrimination, arrest and in an extreme case, attack.

Cambodia guarantees the respect for human rights under Article 31 of its Constitution and has ratified various international human rights treaties. However, in Cambodia, HRDs often face challenges in exercising their rights and freedom. It is widely reported that Cambodia has failed in its obligations to respect and guarantee the rights of HRDs who defend the rights for all.

Particularly, during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the UN Human Rights Council in 2014, Cambodia received and accepted recommendations specifically related to HRDs in Cambodia. Given the growing cases of civil society and activists' crackdown, arrest and criminalization such as the arrest of land activists, NGOs workers and the ban on peaceful demonstration and march, it remains doubtful how Cambodia could justify its commitment to fulfil its human rights obligations and the UPR recommendations directly concerned HRDs during the next UPR in 2019.

LIBRARY HOURS

July 2017

Mon to Fri: 8.45 am – 5.30 pm

UPCOMING EVENT

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!

