

CSHL NEWSLETTER

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BY ELBBL STUDENT

Forced Labour in Cambodia

Forced labour is a worldwide issue. Under Article 4 of human right acts, forced labour refers to being forced to do work you don't want to do under threat of punishment.[1] According to the International Labour Organization's new worldwide estimate, about 21 million people are victims of forced labour around the world, imprisoned in employment they were pressured or tricked into and can't quit.[2]

The 13 international labor conventions have been ratified by Cambodia.[3] Under Article 15 of Labour Law of the Kingdom of Cambodia, forced labour is forbidden and it applies to everyone, including domestics or household staff, as well as all workers in agricultural enterprises or in businesses.[4] Everyone should not be forced to work without their own consent. However, this is still one of the most concerning issues in Cambodia, even these days.

On March 2020, there were over 100 Bangladeshi workers are in a forced labour condition in Cambodia; they were trafficked to Cambodia on Sticker/Stamp visas showing them as tourists or visitors and some of the victims returned to Bangladesh after suffering their ordeals and the others were in Cambodia in difficult conditions.[5]

Moreover; On November 2021, Cambodian and Thai polices saved 99 Thai victims who were being held and forced to run phone scams, deceiving Thai citizens into investing in phony lending companies; those who stood up or resist were abused, beaten, imprisoned, starved and some Thai victims were kidnapped or sold to other groups for ransom.[6] The workers were rescued from a fenced-off three-story structure in Cambodia's capital, according to a Bangkok Post report. Officers also arrested a number of Chinese nationals who were supposedly the workers' managers, according to Deputy National Police Chief Roy Inkhapairo.[7]

There are still more cases related to forced labour and it is not happened only in Cambodia. It is one of the most concerning issues that should not be ignored. Everyone shall have the right to choose what they want to do and shall not be forced to do anything without their consent.

[1] The Human Rights Act, Article 4: Freedom from slavery and forced labour
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-4-freedom-slavery-and-forced-labour>

[2] The International Labour Organization, 21 million people are now victims of forced labour
https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_181961/lang-en/index.htm

[3] The International Labour Organization, Ratification for Cambodia
https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:0::NO:11200:P11200_COUNTRY_ID:103055

[4] Labour Law of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Article 15
<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/701/labour#:~:text=Article%2015%3A,Cambodia%20on%20February%2024%2C%201969.>

[5] Business & Human Rights Resources Center
<https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/cambodia-bangladesh-an-investigative-report-reveals-that-over-100-bangladeshi-workers-works-under-forced-labour-conditions-in-a-construction-sector-in-cambodia/>

[6] Khmer Times, 99 Thais rescued from alleged forced labour in Phnom Penh,
<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50973546/99-thais-rescued-from-alleged-forced-labour-in-phnom-penh/>

[7] Bangkok Post, 99 Thais rescued from alleged forced labour in Phnom Penh,
<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2217775/99-thais-rescued-from-forced-labour-in-phnom-penh>

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CONTACT

Email: sophorn@elbbl-cshl.org

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