

CEDAW MONITORING REPORT FOR CAMBODIA 2024

Acknowledgments

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Acronyms

BFC	Better Factories Cambodia
C.CAWDU	Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers' Democratic Union
CamboJA	Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association
CATU	Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions
CCDO	Community Council for Development Organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CENTRAL	Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights
CFSWF	Cambodian Food and Service Workers' Federation
CHEC	Cambodian Health and Education for Community
CLV-DTA	Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area
COMFREL	Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
CRC-Cambodia	Child Rights Coalition Cambodia
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
GBV	Gender-based violence
HPV	Human Papillomavirus
ILO	International Labor Organization
KSILA	Khmer Student Intelligent League Association
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer
LICADHO	Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights
LSRU	Labor Rights Supported Union of Khmer Employees of NagaWorld
LSG	Lady Saving Group
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NCHADS	National Center for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STD
PD AO	Peace and Development Aid Organization
RHAC	Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPWD	Urban Poor Women Development
WELL	Wellbeing Advancement Organization
WNU	Women's Network for Unity
YRDP	Youth Resource Development Program

Overview of 2024

The rights of women, girls, and non-binary people were undermined by violence, discrimination, and gender stereotypes throughout 2024, with significant progress still required to ensure that Cambodia fulfils its commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

While Cambodia has progressed towards implementing some of the CEDAW Committee's recommendations within its 2019 Concluding Observations, widespread challenges remain. As women's rights movements face backlash and gender equality is under attack globally, heightened and targeted efforts to uphold the rights of women, girls, and non-binary people in Cambodia are more crucial than ever.

The year saw women remain underrepresented in leadership following Cambodia's Senate Elections in February and sub-national elections in May. The years-long crackdown on fundamental freedoms continued, with women trade unionists, environmental and land rights activists, citizens voicing dissent, journalists, and political opponents facing imprisonment, convictions, violence, and discrimination for speaking out. Women also continued to be disproportionately impacted by systemic land grabbing and forced evictions across the country.

Growing economic pressures were shouldered by women, who often hold primary responsibility for managing household finances, undertaking unpaid care work, and ensuring the needs of children and other dependents are upheld. These pressures were heightened by Cambodia's predatory microfinance industry, with the government and international investors yet to provide relief or remedy to affected borrowers.

Gender-based violence (GBV) continued to be perpetrated with limited access to essential services or justice, with widespread legal and policy responses still urgently needed to prevent and respond to such violations. Meanwhile, a human trafficking crisis continued to unfold as online scam compounds proliferated with impunity.

Labor rights violations and exploitative working conditions were also felt in other sectors, such as the informal employment and entertainment sectors. A civil society organization that sought to promote respect for freedom of association faced targeted harassment, while workers who sought to unionize and speak out faced dismissal by employers and lost livelihoods.

Sex workers faced ongoing criminalization and discrimination by authorities, healthcare providers, anti-human trafficking organizations, and society more broadly, with it remaining essential that sex work is recognized as work.

Women acting as surrogates were similarly criminalized, with the first known case of Cambodia convicting foreign nationals for acting as surrogates, in ongoing disregard of the power dynamics within surrogacy arrangements.

Despite some progress, further action is needed to ensure that information and services related to sexual and reproductive health, as well as mental health, are accessible to all women, girls, and non-binary people in Cambodia.

Cambodia made no progress towards legalizing marriage equality in 2024, with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people facing violence and discrimination in their daily and social lives.

Ongoing efforts remained necessary to address the heightened risks of girls' school dropout and the impacts of climate change on education. Research further highlighted that women and girls who are stateless in Cambodia remain without access to essential identity documents and basic services.

Finally, Cambodia's prison overcrowding crisis continued into 2024, with the systemic application of alternatives to detention urgently needed to uphold the rights of women, pregnant people, minor girls, and children detained with their mothers.

Cambodia has enacted or is developing numerous policies that seek to promote gender equality, such as Neary Rattanak VI (2024–2028) and the fourth National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls 2024–2030 (NAPVAW IV). However, policies and action plans such as these risk having limited impacts on the lived realities of women, girls, and non-binary people, as they are often not backed by sufficient investments of financial, technical, and human resources.

Notably, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) remained among the lowest funded ministries in 2024, receiving just 51,067 million riel (about US \$12.77 million) from the National Budget.^[1] While the CEDAW Committee recommended in 2019 that Cambodia allocate sufficient resources and funding to policies and action plans,^[2] this recommendation has yet to be met, with far-reaching consequences for the full range of women's, girls', and non-binary peoples' rights. Dismantling gender stereotypes, which lie at the root of gendered discrimination and violence across the country, remains more crucial than ever.

This report is a summary of key concerns and events that occurred in the calendar year 2024. It does not comprehensively address all issues facing women, girls, and non-binary people in Cambodia but focuses on issues that were new or of particular concern in 2024.

¹ Ministry of Economy and Finance, "Budget in Brief: Fiscal Year 2024", online: <<https://mef.gov.kh/documents/budget-in-brief-2024/>>.

² CEDAW Committee, "Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Cambodia", CEDAW/C/KHM/CO/6, November 12, 2019, para. 15(b), online: <<https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/KHM/CO/6>>.

Women in Leadership

Women remained underrepresented in all spheres of political leadership in 2024, from local to national levels. Women active in politics, particularly those aligned with opposition parties, reported rights violations undermining their political participation. Some reported physical, verbal, and sexual harassment and discrimination, causing psychological harm and threatening the crucial role that women in politics play in Cambodia's development.^[3] This set Cambodia back from achieving the CEDAW Committee's 2019 recommendation to create an enabling environment for women's participation in political and public life.^[4]

The February 2024 Senate Elections were marred by reports of interference. Cambodia's indirect Senate elections involve 58 senators being elected by the country's commune councilors and National Assembly members, as well as two senators being appointed by each the King and National Assembly. The opposition Candlelight Party remained arbitrarily barred from participating in the election by an administrative requirement. Human Rights Watch documented reports of intimidation, threats, bribes, and unlawful enticements in return for opposition commune councilors withholding support for opposition candidates, raising concerns that the election was neither free nor fair.^[5] Chhay Chinda, a Candlelight Party official working with the party's women's wing, was also arrested and imprisoned before the election in January 2024.^[6]

Within this context, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) won 55 seats and the opposition-aligned Khmer Will Party received three seats. Just 11 of Cambodia's 62 Senators (17.7%) were women,^[7] representing only a slight increase from 16.1% under the previous mandate.^[8]

³ កែវ សុខា, "ស្ត្រីគួរឲ្យមានការស្ងៀមស្ងាត់ករណីមានការបៀតបៀនក្នុងពេលប្រឡូកនយោបាយ", WMC, December 26, 2024, online: <<https://wmc.org.kh/women-should-break-their-silence-on-harassment-in-politics/>>.

⁴ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 31(b).

⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Cambodia: Threats, Bribes Tainted Senate Elections", April 3, 2024, online: <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/03/cambodia-threats-bribes-tainted-senate-elections>>.

⁶ LICADHO, "Candlelight Official Arrested, Accused of Election Document Forgery", January 16, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=367>>.

⁷ Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia, "នីតិកាលទី៥ (២០២៤-២០២៨)", online: <<https://senate.gov.kh/senate-leaders/fifth-legislature/>>.

⁸ Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia, "នីតិកាលទី៤ (២០១៨-២០២៤)", online: <<https://senate.gov.kh/senate-leaders/fourth-legislature/>>.

The CPP similarly swept the capital, provincial, municipal, district, and khan indirect elections in May 2024. Following these elections, women represented about 17% of those elected at the capital and provincial levels, and 19% at the municipal, district, and khan levels.^[9] The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, Vitit Muntarbhorn, concluded that Cambodia's elections in 2023 and 2024 were “far from being free and fair” and highlighted that “there is very limited participation of women at the top of the political system, which clearly remains male-dominated.”^[10] This underrepresentation of women stems from gender stereotypes and a range of ongoing challenges perpetuated by society, political parties, and the electoral system.^[11]

Elected representatives at the national and local levels also faced some challenges of discrimination and barriers to decision-making while undertaking their roles and responsibilities. In 2024, the Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL) assessed the experiences and working conditions of 40 elected women commune and Sangkat councilors in 20 communes across five provinces.^[12] COMFREL found that commune chiefs only properly assigned duties to 80% of women councilors in line with their elected positions. Eighty-three percent of the women councilors reported that they expressed opinions in meetings. Budget transparency was reportedly limited in five of the 20 participating communes, with accessing funds to implement initiatives related to women's and children's well-being reportedly challenging in seven communes.

Minority women—including Cham, Khmer Krom, Ethnic Vietnamese, and Indigenous women—also appear underrepresented at all levels of decision-making. Research by Women Peace Makers in 2024 found that 60% of minority women who participated in the study had either rarely or never participated in community development initiatives within their communities.^[13] This stemmed from social norms regarding women's participation in politics, disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work, local authorities discouraging or prohibiting their participation, and barriers stemming from women's reported lack of self-confidence.

⁹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, Vitit Muntarbhorn, A/HRC/57/82, August 5, 2024, para. 44 and 38, online: <<https://cambodia.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/SR%20report.pdf>>.

¹⁰ Ibid., para. 33.

¹¹ For more information, see NGO-CEDAW, “2023 Annual CEDAW Monitoring Report for Cambodia”.

¹² COMFREL, “Summary results of COMFREL's Political Gender Monitoring: Empowering Female Commune and Sangkat Councilors to Perform Tasks at the Grassroots Level, 2024, 2nd Year of the 5th Mandate”.

¹³ Women Peace Makers (2024) “Voice and Visibility: A participatory exploration of minority women's human rights in Cambodia”, online: <<https://wpmcambodia.org/project/voice-and-visibility-a-participatory-exploration-of-minority-womens-human-rights-in-cambodia/>>.



Fundamental Freedoms & Civic Space

A longstanding crackdown on civic space and fundamental freedoms of assembly, association, and expression similarly continued throughout 2024. Women labor, environmental, land, and youth activists, journalists, and citizens who voiced opinions reported imprisonment, threats, surveillance, and sexual harassment. This further undermined the implementation of the CEDAW Committee's 2019 recommendation to fully guarantee women activists' rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association without harassment, surveillance, or undue restrictions.^[14]

Charges under the Criminal Code were often levelled against activists throughout 2024. These charges most often included incitement to commit a felony or disturb social security under Articles 494 and 495, which carry a maximum two-year prison sentence, or plotting under Article 453, which carries a maximum prison sentence of 10 years. As of December 2024, at least 18 women were in prison for their speech, activism, or political participation.^[15]

Trade Unionists

A strike action by members of the Labor Rights Supported Union of Khmer Employees of NagaWorld (LRSU) continued throughout 2024, in response to the NagaWorld casino's 2021 mass layoffs during the pandemic targeting unionists.^[16] The crackdown against these women unionists likewise continued.

In March, striker Morm Sovathin was injured on her hand and foot when a company security member used a steel barricade to push her from accessing the strike location.^[17] In May, the Supreme Court upheld convictions against eight current and former LRSU leaders and members.^[18] Union president, Chhim Sithar, therefore served her full two-year prison sentence on incitement charges before being released in September 2024. Sithar met with her fellow unionists immediately following her release to express her commitment to continue seeking solutions to the labor dispute.^[19]

Civil society groups and communities called for Sithar's unconditional release and an end to the persecution of LRSU following the Supreme Court's verdict.^[20] In October 2024, an International Labor Organization (ILO) committee issued a report in response to a 2022 complaint regarding

¹⁴ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 19.

¹⁵ LICADHO, "Cambodia's Prisoners of Interest", online: <https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/prisoners_of_interest/> [as of December 2024].

¹⁶ For further background, see Joint Statement, "Enough is Enough: Stop Persecuting LRSU Unionists", May 6, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=523>>.

¹⁷ គឹម ចាន់ថារ, "ស្រ្តីកូដករណាហ្គេវើលដ៍ ដែលរងរបួសដៃ អះអាងថា ដំណោះស្រាយវិវាទនៅស្ងាត់ស្ងៀម", WMC, March 5, 2024, online: <<https://wmc.org.kh/injured-nagaworld-striker-claims-dispute-resolution-remains-silent/>>. Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia, "នីតិកាលទី៤ (២០១៨-២០២៤)", online: <<https://senate.gov.kh/senate-leaders/fourth-legislature/>>.

¹⁸ LICADHO, "LRSU Verdicts Upheld, Sithar to Remain in Prison", May 3, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=386>>.

¹⁹ គឹម ចាន់ថារ, "កញ្ញា សមីម ស៊ីថារ លើកពីការបញ្ចប់បន្តបេសកកម្ម ក្រោយចេញពីពន្ធនាគារ", WMC, September 16, 2024, online: <<https://wmc.org.kh/chhim-sithar-expressed-her-commitment-to-continue-the-mission-after-being-released-from-prison/>>.

²⁰ Joint Statement, "Enough is Enough: Stop Persecuting LRSU Unionists", May 6, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=523>>.

violations perpetrated against LRSU leaders and activists.^[21] Among other recommendations, the committee expressed regret that Sithar was made to serve her sentence and called for her to be able to freely engage in legitimate union activities, and for charges against other LRSU activists to be dropped.

In June 2024, 17 civil society groups and unions also called for the reinstatement of local union leader, Roeurn Kolab, to her job at a garment factory. Kolab had been elected as the leader of her factory union in June 2023.^[22] She was dismissed by Shengbo Garment (Cambodia) Co., Ltd. two days later. The factory failed to renew her fixed-duration contract—a common tactic used to deter and undermine union organizing. The CEDAW Committee recommended in 2019 that Cambodia properly enforce caps on fixed-duration contracts and that women on these contracts enjoy their rights to freedom of association, including trade union participation, without fear of termination.^[23]

Environmental Activism

Harassment of women environmental activists continued throughout the year. In January 2024, 13 youth and environmental activists—including multiple women—were questioned for several hours after holding banners and taking photographs calling for the preservation of Koh Kong Krao island.^[24]

In July, 10 environmental activists from the Mother Nature Cambodia movement were convicted and sentenced to six to eight years in prison on charges of plotting and/or insulting the king.^[25] Five activists—including women environmental defenders Long Kunthea and Phuon Keoraksme—were immediately, violently arrested and sent to separate prisons across the country, undermining their access to their families and lawyers.^[26] This is the second time Kunthea and Keoraksme, aged 26 and 23 years old at the time of their recent arrests, are serving prison time for their activism.^[27]

Fifty-three civil society groups and communities condemned the environmental activists' convictions and called for their unconditional release.^[28] Five UN experts similarly condemned the convictions and noted that they "appear to be part of an ongoing State policy to diminish civic space and crackdown on dissenting voices in Cambodia".^[29]

²¹ ILO, "Report in which the committee requests to be kept informed of development – Report No 408, October 2024", online: <https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:50002:0::NO::P50002_COMPLAINT_TEXT_ID:4412910>.

²² Joint Statement, "Respect Union Freedom and Reinstate Elected Union Leader at Shengbo Garment Factory", June 12, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=527>>.

²³ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 37(a).

²⁴ LICADHO, "Activists Questioned over Koh Kong Island Campaign", January 7, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=363>>.

²⁵ LICADHO, "Mother Nature Activists Violently Arrested, Sentenced to 6-8 Years", July 2, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/articles/20240702/195/index.html>>.

²⁶ LICADHO, "Mother Nature Activists Imprisoned Far From Each Other and Their Families", July 3, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=401>>.

²⁷ LICADHO, "Mother Nature Activists Released on Bail", November 12, 2021, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=302>>.

²⁸ Joint Statement, "Conviction of Mother Nature Activists is a National Shame", July 4, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=529>>.

²⁹ "Experts condemn conviction of environmental activists in Cambodia", July 4, 2024, online: <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/experts-condemn-conviction-environmental-activists-cambodia>>.

Freedom of Expression on the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area (CLV-DTA)

From July 2024, a wave of arrests occurred in response to public discourse about the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area (CLV-DTA), a longstanding trade agreement between the three countries. More than 100 people, including at least 12 women, were arrested from July to September. Over 60 of these people were initially charged and imprisoned for allegedly expressing opinions or planning to gather about the CLV-DTA.^[30] Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International labelled the arrests arbitrary and an effort to intimidate critics.^[31]

Among those imprisoned were five members of the Khmer Student Intelligent League Association (KSILA) and Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP), including youth activists Ream Sreyppich Rothana, Sak Kanika, and Seun Sreymai, who were charged with plotting.^[32] Others included Paris Peace Agreement proponents, such as Peung Sophea, who was charged with incitement.^[33] Grassroots Democracy Party activist, Sem Sophal, was similarly imprisoned on incitement charges after she spoke out to defend the right to freedom of expression.^[34] While some activists were released on bail after publicly admitting fault and apologizing to former prime minister Hun Sen and current prime minister Hun Manet,^[35] others such as Rothana, Sophea, and Sophal remained in prison at the year's end. Cambodia withdrew from the CLV-DTA following the public expression, yet many of those who voiced dissent remained in prison.



³⁰ LICADHO, "More Than 60 Charged, Imprisoned Over CLV-DTA", September 16, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/articles/20240916/196/index.html>>.

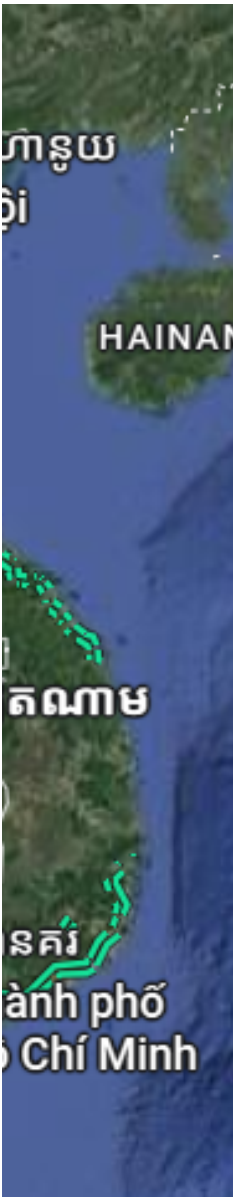
³¹ Human Rights Watch: "Cambodia: Arrests Target Critics of Regional Development Zone", August 28, 2024, online: <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/08/28/cambodia-arrests-target-critics-regional-development-zone>>.

³² LICADHO, "Youth and Student Group Members Denied Bail on Appeal", December 5, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=426>>.

³³ ជា សុខនី, "គ្រួសារសកម្មជនទីក្រុងប៉ារីសបន្តធ្វើតាមនីតិវិធីច្បាប់ដោយរំពឹងថាតុលាការផ្តល់យុត្តិធម៌ជូនពួកគេ", WMC, February 4, 2025, online: <<https://wmc.org.kh/the-families-of-the-paris-activists-continue-to-follow-legal-procedures-expecting-the-courts-to-give-them-justice/>>.

³⁴ Khuon Narim & Tep Suokeany, "Sixteen Youths Released While Several Others Continue To Be Questioned Over Planned CLV-DTA Rally", CamboJA News, August 20, 2024, online: <<https://cambojanews.com/sixteen-youths-released-while-several-others-continue-to-be-questioned-over-planned-clv-dta-rally/>>.

³⁵ Khuon Narim, "Three Youths Released on Bail, Join CPP and Confess Mistake for Involvement in Anti-CLV-DTA", CamboJA News, January 6, 2025, online: <<https://cambojanews.com/three-youths-released-on-bail-join-cpp-and-confess-mistake-for-involvement-in-anti-clv-dta/>>.



Transnational Repression

Cambodia's crackdown on dissent has increasingly compelled activists under threat to go abroad. In response, transnational repression targeted women dissenters abroad in 2024. In September, Cambodian domestic worker Nuon Toeun was deported from Malaysia to face charges in Cambodia.^[36] Toeun was charged with incitement to disturb social security and incitement to discriminate in one case, and incitement to disturb social security and insulting the king in a second case, after she allegedly posted criticism of former prime minister Hun Sen on Facebook. Cambodian authorities worked with Malaysian authorities to have Toeun deported and arrested. She remained in prison at the year's end, and was later convicted in April 2025 in both legal cases against her.^[37]

In November 2024, four women were among six opposition activists who were deported from Thailand.^[38] The six—including five people with refugee status and an asylum seeker—were imprisoned on plotting charges upon returning to Cambodia. A child who was deported with them was released to the care of a family member in Cambodia. The six remained in three separate prisons at the end of 2024. Earlier in the year, Human Rights Watch documented the frequent repression and forced return of refugees in Thailand, noting that the country had become increasingly unsafe for people fleeing persecution.^[39]

Press Freedom & Women in Journalism

Press freedom in Cambodia remained highly repressed in 2024, undermining access to information for all women, girls, and non-binary people in Cambodia. Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index 2024 ranked Cambodia 151 out of 180 countries. That report noted that remaining media outlets must "toe the government line" and that it is "impossible" to cover subjects such as corruption and political opposition.^[40] As a result, women journalists' right to freedom of expression remained restricted. The essential role that women and other journalists play in reporting on gender inequality and GBV in Cambodia also remained undermined.

³⁶ Human Rights Watch, "Malaysia Deports Cambodian Worker for Critical Comments", October 4, 2024, online: <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/10/04/malaysia-deports-cambodian-worker-critical-comments>>.

³⁷ LICADHO, "Nuon Toeun Convicted Following Deportation from Malaysia", April 28, 2025, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=440>>.

³⁸ Human Rights Watch, "Thailand: Cambodian Refugees Forcibly Returned", November 29, 2024, online: <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/11/29/thailand-cambodian-refugees-forcibly-returned>>.

³⁹ Human Rights Watch (2024) "'We Thought We Were Safe': Repression and Forced Return of Refugees in Thailand", online: <<https://www.hrw.org/feature/2024/05/16/we-thought-we-were-safe/repression-and-forced-return-of-refugees-in-thailand>>.

⁴⁰ Reporters Without Borders, World Press Freedom Index, online: <<https://rsf.org/en/country/cambodia>>.

In August 2024, Cambodia rapidly promulgated a Charter for Professional Journalism without meaningful consultations, further encroaching on journalistic freedom.^[41] UN experts called for the Charter's suspension and thorough review, due to its overly broad scope of application, failure to include a public interest override, and the lack of key remedies for factual errors, notably the right to correction and reply.^[42]

Within this repressive landscape, women journalists reported violations such as gendered discrimination, violence, sexual and verbal harassment, and threats by government officials, sources, and male colleagues.^[43] Several women journalists also reported challenges and other harms to the Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA), including family discouragement to continue their work, online harassment, and limited training opportunities.^[44] Some freelance women journalists reported difficulties in obtaining press cards that restricted their work.^[45]

These challenges contributed to and are perpetuated by women's underrepresentation in journalism. Notably, press cards were issued to 269 women in 2023, equivalent to just 8% of the total 3,201 press cards issued by the Ministry of Information that year.^[46]

Land Grabbing & Forced Evictions

Women are often disproportionately impacted by the gendered effects of land grabbing and forced evictions. Longstanding disputes stemming from Economic Land Concessions and new land giveaways to powerful actors continued to cause land rights violations throughout 2024. These set Cambodia further back from meeting the CEDAW Committee's 2019 recommendation to reallocate and distribute land so that women have equal land ownership.^[47]

LICADHO documented that at least 9,813 families were newly impacted by land grabbing and forced evictions across 41 cases in 2024. Land rights activists and communities—often with women at their fore—also continued to face violence, harassment, and criminal convictions for seeking to defend their homes, land, and livelihoods from powerful interests. The instances of land rights violations and harassment below are just some examples of those that occurred across the country throughout the year.

⁴¹ Seoung Nimol, "New Professional Journalism Charter Speedily Implemented Only Days After Input Deadline", CamboJA News, August 7, 2024, online: <<https://cambojanews.com/new-professional-journalism-charter-speedily-implemented-only-days-after-input-deadline/>>.

⁴² "Cambodia: UN experts call for suspension of professional journalism charter", September 12, 2024, online: <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/cambodia-un-experts-call-suspension-professional-journalism-charter>>.

⁴³ For example, see: <<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/18jCziMbob/?mibextid=wwXlfr>>.

⁴⁴ CamboJA (2025) "Cambodian Journalism Situation Report 2024", online: <<https://www.camboja.net/advocacy/reports/annual-report/cambodian-journalism-situation-report-2024/>>.

⁴⁵ For example, see: <<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1AubzsSaPd/>>.

⁴⁶ Ministry of Information (2024) "Report on State of Press Freedom in Cambodia", online: <<https://moi-static.sgp1.digitaloceanspaces.com/0Report-2024/Report%20on%20The%20State%20of%20Press%20Freedom%20in%20Cambodia%20FINAL.pdf>>.

⁴⁷ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 21(a).

Evictions from UNESCO's Angkor World Heritage Site

In December 2024, UN experts expressed concern about the ongoing forced evictions since 2022 of approximately 40,000 people from the Angkor World Heritage Site.^[48] The experts noted that these forced evictions, including of Indigenous people, had been conducted without meaningful consultations with the affected communities and resulted in their relocation to resettlement sites with dire living conditions. The experts called for redress and compensation for the “multiple and overwhelming reports of human rights violations” for those who had been displaced from the UNESCO-protected area and the loss of their homes, agricultural land, and livelihoods.

Amnesty International had previously documented that women faced violence and threats by authorities for opposing their forced eviction from the Angkor World Heritage Site.^[49] Amnesty also found that the Run Ta Ek resettlement site was prone to flooding and lacked basic infrastructure and services, including a lack of sufficient housing, bathrooms, toilets, electricity, and water—which can each disproportionately impact women and girls. Families and communities reported to Amnesty that they had been separated from each other at the settlement site due to being randomly allocated plots of land. As a result, women's access to their community support networks, which often play a crucial role in protecting against domestic violence and sharing childcare, was undermined.

Harassment of Boeng Tamok Lake's Samrong Tbong Community

The capital's Boeng Tamok lake has increasingly been parceled off and given to private actors, without meaningful regard for the communities who live near and rely on the lake for their livelihoods. In January 2024, 38 civil society groups and communities condemned the potential eviction and harassment faced by the Samrong Tbong community, who have lived near the lake since 1996.^[50] These community members faced threats, violence, and criminal charges throughout 2024.

In February, 10 security guards attempted to clear community-occupied land using excavators. A child and two women, including a pregnant woman, were injured in an altercation with authorities while protesting the land clearance.^[51] In May, authorities blocked and shoved community members who were attempting to march to the district hall to meet officials regarding an eviction notice.^[52] In August, nine community members were convicted of intentional acts of violence and obstruction of a public official with aggravating circumstances, receiving suspended two-year prison sentences. The convictions followed a dispute with authorities after community members

⁴⁸ “Cambodia: Experts alarmed over forced resettlement due to heritage conservation”, December 13, 2024, online: <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/12/cambodia-experts-alarmed-over-forced-resettlement-due-heritage-conservation>>.

⁴⁹ Amnesty International (2023) “‘Nobody wants to leave their home’: mass forced evictions at Cambodia's UNESCO world heritage site of Angkor”, online: <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa23/7374/2023/en/>>.

⁵⁰ Joint Statement, “Stop Harassment and Intimidation; Provide Legal Land Tenure to Samrong Tbong Community”, January 25, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=518>>.

⁵¹ LICADHO, “Samrong Tbong Community Reports Violence as Government Clears Land”, February 27, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=378>>.

⁵² LICADHO, “Samrong Tbong Community Members Harassed After Eviction Notices”, May 10, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=389>>.

allegedly violated a construction ban by reinforcing the door to a woman's home to protect her security and belongings.^[53] In November, three women from the Samrong Tbong community were similarly convicted of obstructing public officials with aggravating circumstances. The charges came after authorities had ordered the women to remove a small vegetable shop from outside their home and proceeded to destroy it when they refused. The women received six-month suspended sentences and suspended fines.^[54]

Violence in Preah Vihear Province

A longstanding land dispute between Seladamex Co., Ltd. and families living in the area escalated in 2024. The company had been granted an Economic Land Concession in 2011, leading to a conflict with hundreds of families.

In March, mixed forces entered the area with tractors, and when villagers gathered, authorities deployed live ammunition and a smoke grenade.^[55] Twenty-nine people were arrested on charges of clearing forestland and enclosing it to claim ownership under the Forestry Law. Four people were released on bail. The other 25 people, including 12 women and 13 men, were sent to pre-trial detention until their release on bail the following month.^[56]

Authorities proceeded to burn and destroy community members' homes. A woman whose home was destroyed died by suicide in the following days. The Preah Vihear Provincial Administration subsequently issued a statement denying that her death was connected to authorities' actions, attributed her death to a family argument, and publicly provided money to the family.^[57]

Land Grabbing in Kratie Province

In June 2024, local company Kasekam Youveakchun Svay Rieng Co. Ltd. destroyed villagers' land, crops, and homes within an Economic Land Concession in Kratie province, which had been granted to a Singaporean company in 2009. In both June and November, authorities blocked community members from marching in the capital and imposed other restrictions as they attempted to submit petitions calling on the government to resolve the dispute.^[58]

⁵³ LICADHO, "Nine Samrong Tbong Community Members Convicted", August 16, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=411>>.

⁵⁴ LICADHO, "Samrong Tbong Family Convicted of Obstructing Authorities", November 19, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=422>>.

⁵⁵ LICADHO, "Armed Forces Fire Weapons, Arrest Villagers Amid Longstanding Preah Vihear Land Conflict", March 6, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=379>>.

⁵⁶ LICADHO, "25 People Imprisoned in Preah Vihear Land Dispute", March 12, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=383>>; CCHR, "Fact Sheet: Forced Evictions in Cambodia", October, 2024, online: <<https://www.sithi.org/medias/files/projects/sithi/publication/fact-sheet-on-forced-evictions-eng-final-20241007-083125.pdf>>.

⁵⁷ Som Sotheary, "Woman's suicide not related to land dispute, say authorities", Khmer Times, March 19, 2024, online: <<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501457974/womans-suicide-not-related-to-land-dispute-say-authorities/>>.

⁵⁸ LICADHO, "Kratie Land Community Petitions Government to Stop Land Clearing", June 19, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=395>>; LICADHO, "Kratie Community Camps at Land Ministry to Call for Dispute Resolution", November 7, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=421>>.

Koh Kong Land Activists Convicted

In a longstanding dispute stemming from an Economic Land Concession dating back to 2006, companies linked to a Senator and a well-connected tycoon had established sugar plantations on community land in Koh Kong province. Activists from affected communities faced arrests and convictions in four legal cases in 2023,^[59] with judicial harassment continuing into 2024. In June, 12 Koh Kong activists were convicted of incitement after attempting to submit a petition to authorities. The activists, including eight women, were handed six-month suspended prison sentences.^[60]

REDD+ Carbon Offsetting Project & Indigenous Peoples' Rights Violations

In February 2024, Human Rights Watch published a report documenting that Cambodia's largest carbon offsetting project—the Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project jointly implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Alliance and accredited by Verra—violated the rights of Indigenous Chong people who had lived in the area for centuries.^[61] The project had issued more than 27.6 million carbon credits as of June 2023. Carbon credits are purchased by companies and private individuals to "offset" their emissions. The project had generated more than US\$18 million in the sale of such credits by 2021, with limited transparency surrounding further revenue generation.

Human Rights Watch found that the REDD+ project had violated the rights of Indigenous people, including women, due to the lack of consultations; free, prior, and informed consent for the project; and benefit-sharing agreements. The project had further resulted in violations of the rights of Chong people, who faced harms to their livelihoods, property destruction, forced eviction, arrests and detention for traditional farming methods and collection of sustainable forest products, violence, and other harassment under the project.

Human Rights Watch highlighted that it is unacceptable and counterproductive to sideline and punish Indigenous peoples in conservation efforts, calling for remediation for the violations and revision of the project to ensure genuine participation, titling of Indigenous communal land, and benefit-sharing agreements. While the project was suspended until September 2024, community members have reported that rights violations continue.^[62]

⁵⁹ For more information, see NGO-CEDAW, "2023 Annual CEDAW Monitoring Report for Cambodia".

⁶⁰ LICADHO, "Koh Kong Land Activists Convicted Over Petition Attempt", June 27, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/flashnews.php?perm=400>>.

⁶¹ Human Rights Watch (2024) "Carbon Offsetting's Casualties: Violations of Chong Indigenous People's Rights in Cambodia's Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project", online: <<https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/02/29/carbon-offsettings-casualties/violations-chong-indigenous-peoples-rights>>.

⁶² Flynn, G. "Indigenous community calls out Cambodian REDD+ project as tensions simmer in the Cardamoms", Mongabay, March 10, 2025, online: <<https://news.mongabay.com/2025/03/indigenous-community-calls-out-cambodian-redd-project-as-tensions-simmer-in-the-cardamoms/>>.

Microfinance Debt

Cambodia's predatory microfinance sector continued to undermine the rights of women across Cambodia in 2024, with no meaningful action by any actors to resolve or remedy the country's over-indebtedness crisis. Progress has not been made towards effectively regulating microfinance institutions and establishing an oversight mechanism to prevent exploitative lending practices, as was recommended by the CEDAW Committee in 2019.^[63]

Women continued to make up roughly two-thirds of Cambodia's two million microloan borrowers in 2024, who held over \$18 billion in loans. The average loan amount continued to far exceed the average annual income, and most loans were still collateralized with land titles.

The situation for borrowers deteriorated further in 2024, as the percentage of household and consumer loans that were more than 30 days late on repayment stood at 6.24% by the year's end.^[64] Non-performing loans increased across most banks and microfinance institutions,^[65] reflecting many borrowers' increasing inability to make repayments on time. As a result, non-governmental organizations documented more cases of harassment and pressure to repay loans. Women often responded to this pressure, facing difficult decisions and coercion to choose between the harms caused by the sector, such as whether to take additional loans, sell land, migrate unsafely, eat less food, or take children out of school to afford repayments.

Cambodia's over-indebtedness crisis will continue to disproportionately affect women, particularly Indigenous women and women living in poverty, until the government and international investors who have profited from the crisis provide timely and meaningful relief and remedy to affected borrowers.



⁶³ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 41.

⁶⁴ Credit Bureau of Cambodia, "Retail Credit Index 2024 Q4", online: <<https://www.creditbureau.com.kh/data-for-good-consumer-credit-index>>.

⁶⁵ International Monetary Fund (2025) "Cambodia 2024 Article IV Consultation", online: <<https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/CR/2025/English/1khmea2025001-print-pdf.ashx>>.



Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV), including domestic and sexual violence, sexual harassment, human trafficking, and child marriage, continued in Cambodia in 2024. The physical, mental, and financial harms experienced by many women, girls, and non-binary people were heightened by limited access to essential services and justice, despite wide-ranging recommendations by the CEDAW Committee in 2019 to improve such access.^[66] Some women, girls, and non-binary people, including Indigenous people, also remained deterred from reporting violations due to fears of discrimination, blame, societal stigma, and the expensive and time-consuming nature of legal procedures.

⁶⁶ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 11 and 25.

Prevalence & Perceptions

In January 2024, the Cambodian government drew upon the Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2021–2022 to release further analysis on domestic violence.^[67] The analysis reiterated that over 21% of Cambodian women aged 15–49 who have ever been partnered had experienced physical, sexual, or emotional intimate partner violence as of 2021, a decrease from 29% in 2014. Despite positive trends from 2014 to 2021 across some indicators, concerns remained.

Notably, the analysis found a significant overlap in experiences of physical and sexual intimate partner violence, with most affected women having experienced both types of violence. Ninety percent of women who had experienced intimate partner violence also reported that their partners displayed five or more controlling behaviors. Almost 76% of women who had experienced intimate partner violence reported being fearful of their partner most of the time. Despite this, over half (53%) of women and girls who had experienced physical or sexual violence had never sought help or told anyone about it.

In 2024, Banteay Srei also conducted research to assess knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of GBV and sexual harassment among community members in Siem Reap and Battambang provinces.^[68] Among 240 participants (48% women, 46% men, 6% LGBTQ+ people), over one-third (34%) reported having experienced GBV themselves—including verbal, emotional/psychological, physical, financial, or sexual violence or forced marriages—with higher rates reported among transgender women, lesbians, and people with disabilities.

Family members were the main perpetrators of this violence, followed by neighbors, colleagues, and others. Seventy-four percent of respondents did not report the violence to anyone they know or file a complaint. In addition, 71% of participants had witnessed GBV within their communities. Overall, 27% of respondents reported challenges in accessing support, including limited awareness about where to get help or a lack of services altogether. The study identified similar trends regarding sexual harassment. Thirteen percent of participants reported having experienced sexual harassment themselves, most of whom were women or LGBTQ+ people, who did not file a complaint.

Participants identified that GBV and sexual harassment were most often perpetrated in homes, workplaces, and public spaces. Most reported that violence and harassment had negative impacts on mental and physical health as well as school and work performance. Participants generally expressed disapproval of GBV and sexual harassment and a willingness to prevent them, although some people held victim-blaming attitudes.

⁶⁷ Royal Government of Cambodia (2024) "Further Data Analysis Report from the Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2021–2022: Domestic Violence", online:

⁶⁸ Havas Barefoot Company Limited and Banteay Srei (2024) "Gender Based Violence and Sexual Harassment in the Community: Knowledge, Attitude and Perception/Practice Study", online:
<<https://banteaysrei.info/app/uploads/2025/02/Report-KAP-SHGBV-Community-Final-1.pdf>>.

Discrimination was also prevalent across the communities participating in the research. Over half (55%) of participants reported experiencing feelings of discrimination within their communities, with lesbians, gay men, and people with disabilities reporting higher rates of discrimination.

Banteay Srei found that while communities have baseline knowledge about GBV and sexual harassment, comprehensive knowledge and understanding remain limited. Increased knowledge through education and awareness-raising initiatives could strengthen efforts to address and prevent such abuses. Creating safe spaces and robust support systems where people feel able to report GBV regardless of the perpetrator's identity also remains crucial.

Other research by Women Peace Makers found that Cham, Khmer Krom, Indigenous, and Ethnic Vietnamese communities each widely perceive domestic violence as a problem.^[69] Most participants responded that domestic violence is a problem in their communities, including 94% of Cham participants, 87% of Khmer Krom participants, 85% of Indigenous participants, and 77% of Ethnic Vietnamese participants. Many reported experiencing violence themselves or within their families, including 64% of Indigenous participants, 56% of Khmer Krom participants, 42% of Ethnic Vietnamese participants, and 42% of Cham participants.

In addition to this research, the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO) documented GBV cases throughout 2024. While not representative of the prevalence of GBV in Cambodia, the organization documented and provided services in 76 cases of women's rights violations and 145 cases of girls' rights violations, most of which involved domestic and/or sexual violence.^[70] Seventy-five percent of the women's rights violations were perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner, and 39% of the rape or attempted rape cases against children were perpetrated by a family member. The severity of violence across the cases documented by LICADHO was high, often amounting to attempted killing or murder. Notably, 20 women and girls were killed, and an additional nine girls or young women faced gang rape.

LICADHO also found that technology-facilitated violence was prevalent across its newly documented cases. Some perpetrators of sexual violence connected with girls online before convincing them to meet in person. In five cases, perpetrators filmed sexual violence or other content involving children to distribute online or use to further threaten them. While Cambodia has not enacted specific laws criminalizing the distribution of intimate images without consent, existing laws are applicable in some cases.

⁶⁹ Women Peace Makers, above n 13.

⁷⁰ Information provided by LICADHO.

Sexual Violence & Consent

Virginity culture and traditional gender norms continued to influence attitudes towards consent in Cambodia throughout 2024, which often silenced and suppressed discussions about sexuality and consent. While non-consensual sex is rape, Cambodia's legal definition of rape does not explicitly mention consent.

Klaahaan Organization conducted research in 2024 on perceptions of sexual consent in Cambodia. ^[71] The study included 60 qualitative interviews in three provinces and an online survey of 500 people. It reiterated that non-consensual sex is rape, which results in physical harm, diminished opportunities, social stigma, increased risk of further violence, mental health challenges, and strained relationships. These harms were exacerbated by the lack of support and access to justice for people who have experienced sexual violence.

While 97% of survey participants agreed that consent is important, over half (53%) reported that there is no clear understanding of the concept in Cambodia. Notably, almost one-third of participants (32%) agreed or somewhat agreed that "silence or lack of resistance means consent", underscoring the need for greater awareness about the importance of clear, affirmative consent. Participants similarly reported differing perceptions about the type of acts that require consent. For example, only 21% of participants believed consent was necessary before sharing nude images, and just 15% believed that consent is needed to remove a condom, despite these acts constituting sexual violence if consent is lacking.

Klaahaan's research found that marital rape is supported by societal beliefs that marriage implies perpetual consent and that a woman's body belongs to her husband. These perceptions have the potential to grant men an unfounded sense of entitlement and instill in women a sense of duty or obligation, undermining free consent within marriage. Notably, 7% of participants reported that consent only needs to be given once at the beginning of a relationship, and a further 27% believed that renewed consent is unnecessary within a marriage or committed relationship.

The study reported that some Indigenous women's and girls' right to freely consent is further undermined by early marriage, limited access to information on sexual health and consent, and rigid gender norms. Klaahaan found that some people with disabilities also face disproportionate barriers to accessing information and justice, and that discriminatory societal beliefs can increase the prevalence of violence experienced. While Klaahaan found that LGBTIQ+ people often enjoy more open discussions about consent, it is at times undermined by forced marriages and "corrective rape".

Perceptions about consent could be improved by better integrating comprehensive sexuality education in schools, challenging cultural norms and misconceptions through public education campaigns, improving access to services and justice, and legal and policy reforms to address gaps related to consent.

⁷¹ Klaahaan (2024) "Breaking the Silence: Navigating sexual consent in Cambodia", online: https://www.klaahaan.org/_files/ugd/091c7d_cf7c46a658af404e8c39f80b5a2ec5ef.pdf.

Access to Services & Justice

Access to essential services for people who had experienced GBV remained limited and insufficient throughout 2024. Cambodia had yet to make significant, widespread progress towards the CEDAW Committee's 2019 recommendation to increase access to quality essential services for people who have experienced GBV, including legal, healthcare, and psychosocial services.^[72]

However, MoWA and the Ministry of Health took a positive step in December 2024 by officially launching guidelines on establishing One-Stop Service Units for victims/survivors,^[73] as recommended by the CEDAW Committee.^[74] These units intend to provide holistic medical, legal, psychological, and safety services within provincial referral hospitals, improving access to survivor-centered and trauma-informed care. Further concerted efforts by the government are now required to implement the guidelines and expand the establishment of One-Stop Service Units.

Despite this, overall access to services remained insufficient in 2024. For example, research by Women Peace Makers found that safe shelters were almost entirely inaccessible to minority women: 100% of Ethnic Vietnamese participants, 98% of Cham participants, 96% of Indigenous participants, and 87% of Khmer Krom participants reported that women in their community do not have access to a safe shelter.^[75] Most women reportedly relied on going to the homes of their neighbors, relatives, or local authorities for short-term safety from domestic violence.

Access to justice for GBV similarly remained inaccessible for many women, girls, and non-binary people. While the Cambodian government has signaled its intent to amend the flawed Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims (the Domestic Violence Law), no progress was made towards doing so in 2024. The CEDAW Committee recommended in 2019 that Cambodia amend the law to define, prohibit, and criminalize all forms of GBV and ensure effective access to remedies.^[76] Amending the law remains a necessary first step towards ending the misuse of reconciliation and other alternative dispute resolution practices to strengthen access to remedy.

Research by Child Rights Coalition Cambodia (CRC-Cambodia) in 2024 also noted that Cambodia's justice system was not currently child-friendly, survivor-centered, or trauma-informed. CRC-Cambodia held consultations with 12 girls and 15 boys on children's access to justice and remedies.^[77] Children reported limited access to information and not knowing how to file complaints. They also reported not wanting to file complaints due to perceptions that the legal system is untrustworthy, unaffordable, long and complex, and physically inaccessible, particularly for those living in rural areas or with disabilities. Girls reported not wanting to file complaints due to most police officers, lawyers, and prosecutors being men.

⁷² CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 25(c).

⁷³ UNFPA, "Cambodia Officially Launches the Guidelines on setting up the One-Stop Service Units for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence", December 23, 2024, online: <<https://cambodia.unfpa.org/en/news/cambodia-officially-launches-guidelines-setting-one-stop-service-units-survivors-gender-based>>.

⁷⁴ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 25(c).

⁷⁵ Women Peace Makers, above n 13.

⁷⁶ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 25(b).

⁷⁷ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 25(c).

CRC–Cambodia found that children were often required to repeat their testimony multiple times. Confidentiality and private spaces for providing testimony were also lacking, leading to fears of social stigma and discrimination. Authorities at times ignored children's reports; used harsh, threatening, or patronizing words or tone; and did not explain procedures to children, leaving them confused and worried. Court outcomes were often not perceived as fair or effective, with children left at risk of ongoing harm.

The CEDAW Committee recommended in 2019 that Cambodia address such challenges by developing a comprehensive legal aid scheme, disseminating information about procedures for seeking remedies, strengthening the gender responsiveness of the justice system, and ensuring judicial independence and impartiality.^[78] Further action towards these recommendations remains essential.

Human Trafficking & Online Scam Compounds

A human trafficking crisis continued to escalate in Cambodia in 2024. In August 2023, a UN report outlined that organized criminal gangs were trafficking, detaining, and forcing hundreds of thousands of people across Southeast Asia—including an estimated 100,000 people detained in Cambodia—to carry out online scams generating billions of dollars in annual revenue.^[79] Men and women had reportedly been deceitfully recruited from over 40 countries as of 2023, including from countries across East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Africa, and other regions.^[80]

The UN noted that these trafficked people faced “a range of serious violations and abuses, including threats to their safety and security” and that “many have been subjected to torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, arbitrary detention, sexual violence, forced labour, and other human rights abuses”.^[81]

While reports indicate that most people trafficked to these compounds are men,^[82] women and girls have also been trafficked. Women have reportedly experienced rape and other forms of sexual violence within scam compounds, or been sold into sexual exploitation for failing to perform successfully as online scammers.^[83]

⁷⁸ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 11.

⁷⁹ OHCHR, “Hundreds of thousands trafficked to work as online scammers in SE Asia, says UN report”, August 29, 2023, online: <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/08/hundreds-thousands-trafficked-work-online-scammers-se-asia-says-un-report>>.

⁸⁰ UNODC (2023) “Casinos, cyber fraud, and trafficking in persons for forced criminality in Southeast Asia”, online: <https://www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/documents/Publications/2023/TiP_for_FC_Policy_Report.pdf>.

⁸¹ OHCHR, above n 79.

⁸² UNODC, above n 80; OHCHR, above n 79.

⁸³ UNODC, above n 80.

Despite the UN emphasizing that people detained in scam compounds are victims, Cambodia has continued to treat many as illegal immigrants. Raids on compounds since 2022 have targeted a fraction of sites, which often subsequently resumed operations.

The US 2024 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report regarding Cambodia noted that “corruption and official complicity – including by high-level senior government officials – in trafficking crimes remained widespread and endemic”.^[84] It highlighted that some properties used by online scam operators are, either directly or indirectly via business relationships, owned by senior Cambodian government officials and advisors, resulting in Cambodia’s “politically motivated enforcement of laws”, selective interventions by law enforcement, and dismissal of the issue. The TIP reports ranked Cambodia as Tier 3—the lowest ranking—in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

The UK, US, and Canada announced a package of sanctions in December 2023, affecting nine individuals and five entities for their involvement in trafficking people to online scam compounds in Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar.^[85] The US imposed sanctions on Cambodian Senator and tycoon Ly Yong Phat and a range of his business ventures in September 2024, “for their role in serious human rights abuses related to the treatment of workers subjected to forced labor in online investment scam operations.”^[86]

Notably, reports indicate that Cambodia’s online scam industry continued to expand throughout 2024, with evidence of at least 11 sites being developed from December 2023 to October 2024.^[87] This human trafficking crisis has set Cambodia significantly further back from meeting the CEDAW Committee’s 2019 recommendations to ensure that traffickers and other relevant actors are prosecuted and punished.^[88]

⁸⁴ US Department of State, “2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Cambodia”, online: <<https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-trafficking-in-persons-report/cambodia/>>.

⁸⁵ “UK and allies sanction human rights abusers”, December 8, 2023, online:

⁸⁶ US Department of State, “Imposing Sanctions on Human Traffickers and Online Investment Scam Operations in Cambodia”, September 12, 2024, online: <<https://2021-2025.state.gov/imposing-sanctions-on-human-traffickers-and-online-investment-scam-operations-in-cambodia/>>.

⁸⁷ Cyber Scam Monitor, “Cambodia’s Online Compounds Continue to Expand”, October 29, 2024, online: <<https://cyberscammonitor.substack.com/p/cambodias-online-compounds-continue>>.

⁸⁸ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 27(e).



Employment & Labor Rights

Labor rights violations and exploitative working conditions, notably in the informal employment and entertainment sectors, continued in Cambodia throughout the year.

Working Conditions for Food Delivery Drivers

Forthcoming research by the Cambodian Food and Service Workers' Federation (CFSWF) conducted throughout 2024 suggests that women in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Preah Sihanouk are increasingly working in the "gig economy" as food delivery drivers, particularly following a decrease in employment opportunities in the garment industry.^[89] The CEDAW Committee had recommended in 2019 that Cambodia effectively protect the rights of women in the informal employment sector and ensure their access to social security benefits.^[90]

The preliminary research findings indicate that women in this informal sector face a widespread range of challenges related to safety, harassment, discrimination, and violence; exclusion from social protection benefits and other protections under Cambodia's labor law; and exposure to dangerous road conditions and harsh weather. Concerns about safety, particularly at night, also limit women's working hours and result in lower earnings compared to men.

Women platform workers also reported a wide range of challenges due to the policies and practices of food delivery platforms. While practices vary across platforms, most do not provide workers with any insurance, safety equipment, or support for work-related accidents. They also do not provide paid weekends, public holidays, or annual, sick, or maternity leave. In contrast, workers are reportedly compelled to work a minimum number of hours or complete a minimum number of deliveries per day. Some platforms levy penalties in the form of account deactivation after three days of inactivity, or lower payment rates per delivery if workers take leave. For example, one platform reportedly reduces workers' income from US\$0.50 to US\$0.17 per delivery in the week after they take any form of leave, including sick leave. In general, low payment rates compel many people to work excessive hours, with reports of some working up to 17 hours per day.

Some women also reported gendered discrimination and discriminatory hiring practices by platforms. For example, a woman shared that the platform said that they did not want new women drivers because they drive slower than men and cause lower customer satisfaction. Workers who have protested platform policies or advocated for better working conditions reported that they stopped receiving any customer orders, losing their livelihoods as a result.

The findings highlight the importance for platform workers to be able to freely form and join trade unions and associations; an end to exploitative policies and practices of platforms; and the full inclusion of platform workers and other informal employment sector workers under Cambodia's labor law, to ensure that they are not excluded from the basic rights and protections afforded to others.

⁸⁹ CFSWF (2025) "Social Protection for Women App Worker in Food Delivery".

⁹⁰ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 37(b).

Better Factories Cambodia & Freedom of Association Compliance Monitoring

In June 2024, the Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL), the Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU), and the Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers' Democratic Union (C.CAWDU) published research documenting the extent to which freedom of association is protected in the garment, footwear and travel goods sector and whether Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) appropriately assesses barriers to freedom of association.^[91] The joint research included three focus groups with 78 union representatives at 22 factories and interviews with unionists from 14 of those factories. Research such as this plays an essential role in supporting the right to freedom of association for all garment workers in Cambodia, most of whom are women.

BFC, which is a joint program by the ILO and International Finance Corporation, aims to monitor and inform brands and buyers about compliance with international labor standards within exporting garment factories. The study found that not only were BFC's compliance reports and other information difficult for unionists to access and understand, but the findings lacked sufficiently detailed information and were often inconsistent with unionists' lived experiences. Notably, BFC had issued the 14 factories with perfect scores on freedom of association, yet unionists in 10 of those factories reported intimidation, threats, harassment, and blacklisting that undermined their right to freedom of association. As a result, the unionists reported that BFC's reports were often not useful in their efforts to advocate and negotiate for respect for freedom of association.

Following the report's publication, CENTRAL faced targeted backlash from government-aligned unions and government reprisals. In June 2024, 44 civil society groups and communities condemned the Ministry of Interior's decision to investigate the non-governmental organization.^[92] Human Rights Watch noted that the reprisals against CENTRAL threatened "not just labor rights but all critical reporting by civil society in Cambodia".^[93]

⁹¹ CENTRAL, CATU and C.CAWDU (2024) "Barriers to Representation: Freedom of Association in Cambodia", online: <<https://central-cambodia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Barriers-to-Representation--Freedom-of-Association-in-Cambodia.pdf>>.

⁹² Joint Statement, "Stop Reprisals Against CENTRAL Over Better Factories Report", June 27, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=528>>.

⁹³ Human Rights Watch, "Cambodia: Smear Campaign against Labor Group", July 2, 2024, online: <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/02/cambodia-smear-campaign-against-labor-group>>.

Lack of Remedy from Evergreen Apparel (Cambodia)

Throughout 2024, nine women continued to fight for proper remedy and compensation from Evergreen Apparel (Cambodia). Evergreen Apparel ceased operations in February 2019, leaving about 1,700 workers without remedy or the proper compensation they were entitled to under Cambodia's Labor Law. Following years of negotiations, all but nine of the workers accepted settlements.^[94] The nine have continued to demand full respect for their rights, including their final wages and other compensation to which they are legally entitled.

Despite these workers' relentless efforts to seek intervention from relevant authorities, ministries, and other institutions, Evergreen Apparel has sought to avoid accountability and delay providing a proper remedy. The workers report that the lack of proper remedy and their unstable employment situation severely impacted their physical, mental, and financial well-being. Women among the nine reported harms including discrimination, social exclusion, and depression. They have been unable to afford rent, utilities, or sufficient food, and their financial situation does not allow them to sufficiently access maternal healthcare, support their children's education, or ensure their aging parents' and family members' medical and other needs are met. The workers also report challenges in making debt repayments and have had to incur additional debt while waiting for a response from Evergreen Apparel and relevant authorities.

The nine workers continued to seek protection of their rights throughout 2024 by calling on relevant authorities, mechanisms, international brands, and Evergreen Apparel for remedy. The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, Evergreen Apparel, and brands have so far failed to ensure that the nine workers have access to a suitable remedy.



⁹⁴ See, Sorn Sarath, "Three years on, former workers of closed garment factory still struggle for compensation", CamboJA News, April 4, 2022, online: < [Information provided by WNU](#) >.

Labor Rights in the Entertainment Sector

Many entertainment venues—such as restaurants, bars, nightclubs, massage parlors, and karaoke establishments—disregarded labor rights and enforced exploitative policies without accountability throughout 2024. Women’s Network for Unity (WNU) documented that entertainment workers do not have a protected legal minimum wage; often do not have employment contracts and related legal protections; sometimes work without pay and for tips only; often work overtime without compensation; and experience loss of employment without access to legal benefits. WNU similarly found that very few entertainment workers have access to social protections. For example, just eight out of 160 surveyed entertainment workers reported having access to the National Social Security Fund.^[95]

WNU has found that widespread use of exploitative policies across the entertainment sector has normalized the practice, deterred workers from organizing for better working conditions, and caused workers to move to work in less secure environments. The broader economic environment has also contributed to closures and suspensions across the entertainment and tourist sectors, without protections for workers. Together, these conditions caused low incomes, growing debt, and worse living standards among entertainment workers.

Entertainment workers, including sex workers, must be free to exercise their right to freedom of association and have access to the basic rights and protections enshrined in Cambodia’s Labor Law and related proclamations (Prakas) on working conditions.



⁹⁵ Information provided by WNU.



Discrimination Against Sex Workers

The CEDAW Committee recommended in 2019 that Cambodia revise its national legislation to decriminalize sex workers and address factors such as poverty and structural gender inequality.^[96] Yet, ongoing criminalization continued to undermine workers' ability to negotiate safer and healthier working conditions and deterred them from seeking justice for rights violations through the legal system. Human trafficking interventions also continued to conflate trafficking and sex work, unduly impinging on sex workers' rights.

WNU documented the arrests of 116 sex workers in 2024.^[97] Many were initially transferred to district halls, the Prey Speu Social Affairs Centre, or drug rehabilitation centers, where people have reportedly been arbitrarily detained against their will. WNU additionally documented at least 10 cases of violence and exploitation perpetrated against sex workers in 2024 by security guards, clients, intimate partners, and detention center staff. Some sex workers also reported facing double discrimination and marginalization based on their gender identity and expression. Notably, transgender sex workers reported an increase in public abuse, insults, and harassment in 2024, without interventions or support by authorities.

Sex workers also reported risks of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as access to condoms remained limited by financial constraints, limited information about where to get them, and discrimination at health centers. Similar factors caused sex workers with unwanted pregnancies to resort to unsafe and costly home abortions, contributing to higher rates of maternal mortality. Addressing and ending discrimination in healthcare, legal services, and among the public remains essential.

⁹⁶ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 29.

⁹⁷ Information provided by WNU.

Surrogacy

Cambodia continued to criminalize women acting as surrogates in 2024. In 2019, the CEDAW Committee called on Cambodia to stop detaining women who acted as surrogates and end the practice of making their release conditional upon raising the children as their own.^[98]

Cambodia issued a proclamation (Prakas) in 2016 prohibiting all forms of surrogacy. The government subsequently began developing a draft law intended to comprehensively regulate the practice. A draft law was circulated in the following years, yet it raised further concerns^[99] and had not been finalized or enacted as of 2024. Instead, Cambodia continued to criminalize women acting as surrogates under existing provisions of the Criminal Code and the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation.

Cambodia's response to surrogacy has been narrowly rooted in prohibiting the sale of children. While this is an essential consideration in response to surrogacy, the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children has noted the "dire consequences" of Cambodia's "strict interpretation" of this notion, which risks failing to consider the best interests of the child and the rights of the women acting as surrogates and intending parents.^[100]

In September 2024, 25 women—including 20 Filipina women, 4 Vietnamese women, and a Cambodian woman—were detained in Cambodia. Eleven women were released when they were found not to be pregnant. However, 13 Filipina women acting as surrogates, who were at varying stages of pregnancy, were detained in a police hospital for several months. The Cambodian woman, who had worked to cook and clean for the pregnant women, was sent to pre-trial detention in Phnom Penh's Correctional Center 2.^[101]

⁹⁸ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 47(a).

⁹⁹ See, NGO-CEDAW, "2022 CEDAW Monitoring Reports for Cambodia", online: <https://www.klahaan.org/_files/ugd/091c7d_a50ffd17d4994b14a2ee649f579a8273.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material, A/74/162, 15 July 2019, para. 77, online: <<https://docs.un.org/A/74/162>>.

¹⁰¹ Sovann Sreypich and Tang Porgech, "Cambodian and Thai Authorities Investigate Surrogacy Case As Filipino Surrogate Mothers Are Detained Until Delivery", *CamboJA News*, October 22, 2024, online: <<https://cambojanews.com/cambodian-and-thai-authorities-investigate-surrogacy-case-as-filipino-surrogate-mothers-are-detained-until-delivery/>>.

In the first known case of Cambodia convicting foreign nationals for acting as surrogates, the 13 Filipina women were convicted in December 2024 on human trafficking related charges. They were sentenced to four years in prison, with two years suspended.^[102] The 13 were granted a royal pardon later that month and repatriated to the Philippines, together with three of the infants born during the women's detention.^[103] It is unclear from public reporting where the intending parents reside, and who was made responsible for raising the children. The Cambodian woman was convicted of failing to report a crime and conspiracy. She had already spent two months in prison at the time of her conviction, with the remainder of her six-month sentence suspended.

Overall, Cambodia has yet to make progress towards enacting the 2019 CEDAW Committee recommendations regarding surrogacy, and has instead continued to criminalize those most marginalized.



¹⁰² the Philippines, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, "Philippine Embassy Statement on the Case of 13 Filipino Surrogates Charged for Violation of Cambodian Laws", December 2, 2024, online: <<https://phnompenhpe.dfa.gov.ph/embassy-news/1317-philippine-embassy-statement-on-the-case-of-13-filipino-surrogates-charged-for-violation-of-cambodian-laws>>.

¹⁰³ Embassy of the Philippines, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, "Statement on the Repatriation of the 13 Filipino Surrogates from Cambodia", December 30, 2024, online: <<https://phnompenhpe.dfa.gov.ph/embassy-news/1329-dfa-statement-on-the-repatriation-of-the-13-filipino-surrogates-from-cambodia>>; Embassy of the Philippines, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, "Philippine Ambassador Conveys Appreciation to Philippine Airlines for the Safe Repatriation from Cambodia of the 13 Filipino Surrogates", January 8, 2025, online: <<https://phnompenhpe.dfa.gov.ph/embassy-news/1331-philippine-ambassador-conveys-appreciation-to-philippine-airlines-for-the-safe-repatriation-from-cambodia-of-the-13-filipino-surrogates>>.

Healthcare

Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights

Cambodia made some progress towards improving access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) throughout 2024. However, further action is needed to fully implement the health-related recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee in 2019.^[104] Notably, further action is necessary to ensure that all young people have access to Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and that services are available to all women, girls, and non-binary people.

As of 2024, 16,245 teachers had reportedly been trained on how to use the country's Health Education textbook, equivalent to about 20% of the 80,000 teachers that Cambodia has committed to train.^[105] The slow training rate resulted in a continuing shortage of people qualified to teach CSE. A forthcoming study by the Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC) further found that a lack of printed materials and textbooks continued to pose a key challenge in access to quality CSE.^[106] RHAC identified that cultural norms, stigma, and misinformation surrounding SRHR undermined access to necessary education and services.

Cambodian Health and Education for Community (CHEC) also worked with local authorities, teachers, and health center staff in four provinces throughout 2024 to provide community and youth education on SRHR, online health counselling, and referrals. Through their work, CHEC identified that youth face challenges in accessing healthcare due to distance and a lack of transportation to services; confidentiality concerns given that some health centers lack separate counseling rooms; hesitance among some people to disclose health issues due to fear of discrimination; and the prevalence of malnutrition due to insufficient access to food.

Urban Poor Women Development (UPWD) similarly conducted outreach and small group meetings with 820 people (82% women) across 31 communities in 2024. UPWD identified several challenges, including financial constraints that prevent women from accessing healthcare; difficulties in accessing STI testing, particularly among women aged over 60; and limited dissemination of health policy information among the public. Addressing each of these challenges is required to ensure that all Cambodian women, girls, and non-binary people have access to essential services and information.

¹⁰⁴ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 39(a)-(b).

¹⁰⁵ Information provided to RHAC.

¹⁰⁶ RHAC (2024) "Fact Sheet – An Assessment of CSE Intervention on Sexual Behaviors among Cambodian Adolescents: A Mixed Method Study", online: <<https://rhac.org.kh/storage/publication/CSE%20Intervention%20Factsheet-Eng.pdf>>.

Cambodia also made some progress towards the CEDAW Committee's 2019 recommendation to ensure access to voluntary and confidential counselling, testing, and treatment for HIV.^[107] Cambodia aims to achieve the global "95-95-95" target to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2030, under which 95% of people living with HIV know their status, 95% of people diagnosed with HIV receive antiretroviral therapy, and 95% of people receiving such therapy achieve viral load suppression. Based on an achievement report disseminated by the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STD (NCHADS), Cambodia had met two of these targets as of September 2024: 89% of people living with HIV knew their status; more than 98% were receiving antiretroviral therapy; and over 98% had achieved viral load suppression.^[108] NCHADS further reported that over 27,000 people were using PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to significantly reduce their risk of contracting HIV.

Finally, Cambodia took some action towards preventing cervical cancer, as was recommended by the CEDAW Committee in 2019.^[109] Cervical cancer is largely preventable through vaccination against Human Papillomavirus (HPV). From October 2023, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and local administrations, began offering free HPV vaccines to nine-year-old girls nationwide through regular school and community vaccination outreach sessions, as well as year-round services at health centers.^[110] Ensuring comprehensive access to these vaccines among Cambodian women, girls, and non-binary people of all ages, coupled with sufficient access to information and regular HPV screening, would signify significant progress towards preventing and addressing cervical cancer in Cambodia.

¹⁰⁷ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 39(a).

¹⁰⁸ NCHADS (2024) "Achievements of the implementation of the AIDS and STD prevention, care, and treatment program from January to September 2024" [Print only].

¹⁰⁹ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 39(d).

¹¹⁰ UNICEF, "Life-saving HPV vaccine introduced nationwide into routine immunization schedule to prevent cervical cancer in Cambodia", October 5, 2023, online: <<https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/press-releases/life-saving-hpv-vaccine-introduced-nationwide-routine-immunization-schedule-prevent>>.

Mental Healthcare

Women, girls, and non-binary people—including those who had experienced GBV—faced significant barriers in accessing mental healthcare throughout 2024. Mental health services are scarce in many parts of the country, particularly rural areas, with healthcare facilities often lacking any trained mental health professionals. Cultural stigma surrounding mental health, fear of judgment, financial constraints, and pressure to prioritize other basic needs over mental health also blocked many women and girls from accessing care. This contributed to a cycle in which mental health needs went unaddressed, further exacerbating the other challenges women and girls face across their lives.

In 2024, the Wellbeing Advancement Organization (WELL) conducted internal research on youth well-being.^[111] The study, which included 150 university students from various provinces who were studying in Phnom Penh, found that 52% of the participants reported physical health problems, 49% reported stress, anxiety, and depression, and 51% reported financial anxiety. One in five youth reported facing more than one of these well-being challenges. The study highlighted potentially gendered differences in mental health experiences: 56% of women and girls reported anxiety in comparison to 45% of men and boys.

WELL also received reports from the Lady Saving Group (LSG), a diverse network of women, indicating a rise in mental health challenges among women owners of micro, small, and medium enterprises. Both youth and women entrepreneurs cited limited access to affordable mental health services and persistent stigma surrounding mental health as significant barriers to seeking support.

Addressing the mental health needs of women, girls, and non-binary people in Cambodia, including those who have experienced GBV, is crucial. Doing so requires not only improved access to mental health services and financial support but also widespread work to address stigma. Further research on the intersection of mental health, gender, and GBV in Cambodia is also essential for developing effective interventions that make meaningful differences in women's and girls' lives.

¹¹¹ WELL (2024) "Internal Research on Wellbeing of Youth and SME Women Owners".



Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression

Violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression continued in Cambodia throughout 2024. In January, a government representative acknowledged that discrimination was strongly evident in Cambodia. The representative cited this as a basis to delay the legalization of same-sex marriage, noting the potential for marriage equality to cause “disunity in our society”.^[112] Cambodia’s ongoing failure to legalize marriage equality entrenches rather than addresses discriminatory societal views. Research conducted in 2023 indicates that more than half of Cambodians (57%) favor marriage equality.^[113]

¹¹² Seoung Nimol, “Gov’t Studies Same-Sex Marriage Law Amid Prejudices, Risk of Breaking Tradition”, *CamboJA News*, January 1, 2024, online: <<https://cambojanews.com/govt-studies-same-sex-marriage-law-amid-prejudices-risk-of-breaking-tradition/>>.

¹¹³ Pew Research Center, “Across Asia, views of same-sex marriage vary widely”, November 27, 2023, online: <<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/11/27/across-asia-views-of-same-sex-marriage-vary-widely/>>.

CHEC researched the challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ people in their daily and social lives in 2024. ^[114] The research included a semi-structured questionnaire, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews with 208 LGBTIQ+ youth, 127 parents, 42 local authorities, and 36 health staff in four provinces.

The study found that roughly a quarter of LGBTIQ+ youth reported being uncomfortable in their communities (28%) and families (24%). LGBTIQ+ participants reported verbal abuse, feeling looked down upon, stigma, and exclusion within their communities. They also reported verbal abuse and physical violence within families, including beatings, forceful removal from their homes, and forced marriages. Less than half of the parents (46%) who participated reported being in favor of accepting LGBTIQ+ children.

Over half of LGBTIQ+ students also reported stigma in schools (53%) and sexual harassment at educational institutions or workplaces (57%), such as verbal harassment, sexual jokes, and unwanted touching. Almost a quarter of LGBTIQ+ participants (24%) reported discrimination in employment. A majority of local authorities identified employment discrimination (69%), institutional discrimination (62%), and violence (52%) as challenges facing LGBTIQ+ people. Despite this, LGBTIQ+ youth in focus groups reported that local authorities at times disregarded their problems due to their gender identity.

Positively, most LGBTIQ+ participants (84%) agreed that they had access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and social security. Of those who accessed such services, most (57%) reported no significant service gaps, although others reported challenges stemming from low-quality services, delayed service delivery, lack of attention, and inadequate care. Participants also reported that some health center staff were verbally abusive or displayed a lack of interest in listening to their concerns. A notable percentage of health staff identified inaccessibility of health services (33%) and irregular services (25%) as challenges facing LGBTIQ+ people.

CHEC's research identified key recommendations to address this discrimination, including building awareness and public education about the rights of LGBTIQ+ people; promoting and enabling reporting of discrimination and bullying; increasing visibility and representation; and enhancing legal and policy protections against discrimination.

¹¹⁴ CHEC Cambodia (2024) "LGBTIQ Challenges and Problems in their Daily Living and Social Communication".

Education

School Dropout

While Cambodia has progressed towards achieving gender equality in education, ongoing efforts are required to maintain progress and reduce school dropout. The CEDAW Committee recommended in 2019 that Cambodia address the specific barriers girls experience to remaining in secondary and tertiary education.^[115]

As of 2022–2023, the primary education completion rate was 89% for girls and 85% for boys. However, the primary education dropout rate during the same period was 9.5% for girls—exceeding dropout rates even during COVID-19—compared to 5.5% for boys. The lower secondary-level dropout rate was 17% for girls and 19% for boys. The higher education gross enrolment rate was 19% for women aged 18 to 22, and 16.5% for men.^[116]

Throughout 2024, the Community Council for Development Organization (CCDO), with Rachana and Peace and Development Aid Organization (PDAO), researched school dropout in Takeo province.^[117] The research aimed to include 92 teachers (40% women), 92 children and youth (50% girls), and 92 parents or caregivers (60% of whom had children who had dropped out of school). The preliminary report cites factors that contribute to school dropout, including poverty, microfinance and private debt, the need for children to contribute to household income, migration, family conflict, family members' illness or death, and poor learning outcomes due to a lack of school materials and funds to pay for private tutoring. The study also identified four children, including three girls, for whom corporal punishment or discrimination based on socio-economic status by teachers or other children in schools was a factor in their dropout.

Research by Women Peace Makers also found that minority women and girls—including Cham, Khmer Krom, Ethnic Vietnamese, and Indigenous women and girls—faced barriers to education based on intersecting forms of discrimination.^[118] Notably, 24% of participants had not completed any education and 37% of respondents had only completed primary education. Just 10% of respondents had completed university. In the face of financial pressures within families, the research found that preference was given to boys' education over girls' education. Almost half of the participants had additionally faced bullying and discrimination at school based on their religion, dress, or perceived statelessness or citizenship status. Some participants also reported barriers to education based on discrimination linked to language differences.

¹¹⁵ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 35(a).

¹¹⁶ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (2024) "Education Strategic Plan 2024–2028", online:

¹¹⁷ CCDO, "Assessment on Children Dropout School: Child Rights for Education".

¹¹⁸ Women Peace Makers, above n 13.

Climate Change & Girls' Education

Cambodian girls' access to education is threatened by climate change. In 2019, the CEDAW Committee recommended that Cambodia ensure women's effective participation in developing climate change policies and action plans, and explicitly integrate a gender perspective within these responses.^[119] The Committee on the Rights of the Child further recognized in 2023 that education is instrumental to protecting children's rights and the environment; the right to education is threatened by environmental damage; and environmental degradation has gender-specific impacts, such as increased domestic and financial burdens that contribute to school dropout.^[120]

In 2024, four organizations published a joint submission on how climate change impacts the equal enjoyment of girls' right to education in Cambodia. The submission considered recent developments, literature, and the perspectives of 15 Cambodian girls living in areas particularly affected by climate change.^[121] It found that climate change increased the amount of household work done by girls, particularly older daughters. Frequent floods, heatwaves, and droughts could also contribute to girls' school dropout by disrupting education; decreasing families' livelihood stability; negatively impacting mental health in the short- and long-term; disrupting water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities in schools; and disrupting road quality and transport to schools.

Despite these far-ranging impacts, shortcomings in the quality of education in Cambodia resulted in girls having limited understanding of their rights, environmental issues, and climate change. In combination with gender norms and other factors, this contributed to girls being excluded from decision-making processes regarding climate change at all levels. While Cambodia has developed several policies and guidelines to improve environmental teaching in schools and build climate change resilience, adequate resources are required for their meaningful implementation.

The organizations suggested addressing these challenges by ensuring adequate funds from the national budget; ensuring that the collection of climate change related data is child sensitive and disaggregated; legally recognizing children's right to a safe, healthy and sustainable environment, including children's right to access information and participate in decision-making; building safe, healthy, resilient and gender-responsive school infrastructure; and aligning the curriculum for environmental and climate change education with international best practice.

¹¹⁹ CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 43(a)-(b).

¹²⁰ Committee on the Rights of the Child, "General comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change", CRC/C/GC/26, August 22, 2023, online: <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FGC%2F26&Lang=en>.

¹²¹ CRC-Cambodia, Child and Youth-Led Networks (CYLNs), ActionAid International Cambodia (AAC) and Live & Learn Cambodia (2024) "Civil Society Input from Cambodia", online: <<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/education/cfis/res-54-19/subm-how-climate-change-cso-civil-society-input-from-cambodia.docx>>.

Statelessness

Statelessness continued to undermine the rights of women, girls, and non-binary people in Cambodia throughout 2024. The CEDAW Committee called on Cambodia in 2019 to ensure access to nationality for all eligible women, particularly women of Vietnamese origin and Khmer Krom women, and ensure their access to identity documentation, birth registration, education, employment, healthcare, and housing.^[122]

In 2024, Women Peace Makers and Nationality For All published a study examining the scope and conditions of specific stateless populations and those at-risk of statelessness in Cambodia. The study identified long-term residents of Vietnamese origin, some Khmer Krom people, and refugees as most at-risk.^[123]

The study found that Cambodia does not officially recognize that there are stateless people in the country. As a result, Cambodia does not collect any relevant data and the extent of statelessness is unclear. The study identified that long-term residents of Vietnamese origin often do not have proof of either Cambodian or Vietnamese nationality, despite strong claims for Cambodian citizenship, and are often treated by authorities as 'Vietnamese nationals'. The study further identified that some Khmer Krom people lack proof of Cambodian citizenship due to administrative requirements, despite their strong claims to citizenship.

The study found that statelessness undermines people's access to basic rights, services, and protections, such as birth and marriage registration; public schooling, healthcare, and employment; freedom of movement; land ownership and security; political participation; access to justice; and social services, such as the IDPoor program. It found that barriers to birth registration and ineffective naturalization policies are perpetuating statelessness across generations.

The study recommends that Cambodia move to both reduce and prevent statelessness by officially acknowledging its existence; collecting public data about affected populations; addressing discrimination among the public and all relevant actors; ensuring non-discriminatory access to birth and marriage registration; providing universal education, regardless of identity documentation; better implementing existing policies, such as those related to permanent resident cards; and enacting non-discriminatory pathways to Cambodian naturalization and citizenship.

¹²² CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 33(a)-(b).

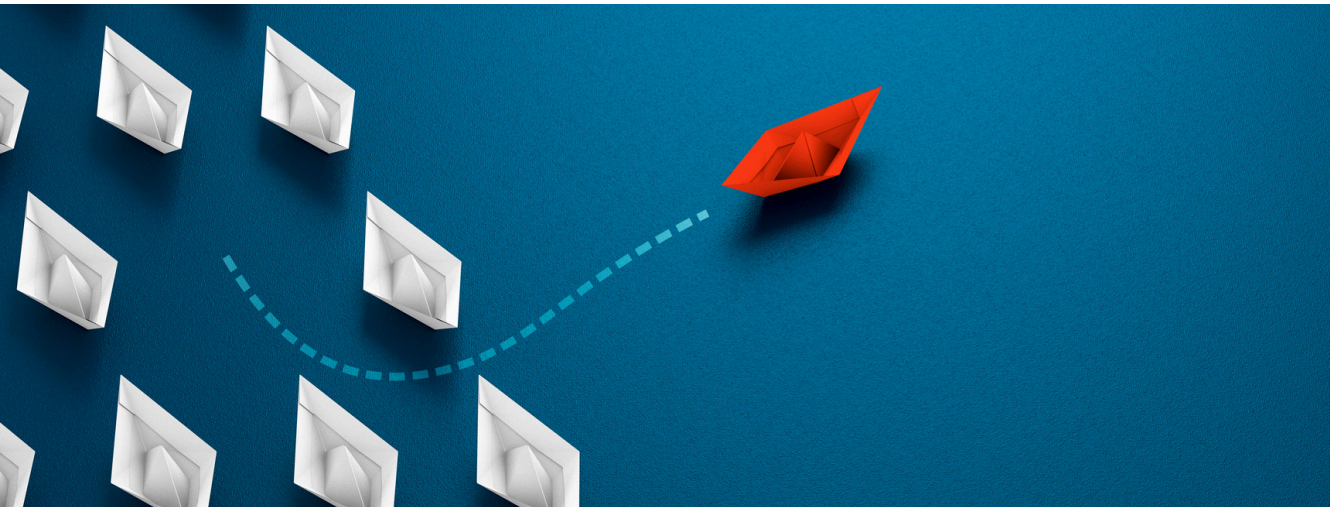
¹²³ Women Peace Makers and Nationality for All (2024) "Mapping Statelessness in Cambodia: A Review of the Current Context and Conditions", online: <https://wpmcambodia.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2024_Mapping_Statelessness_in_Cambodia.pdf>.

Freedom of Religion & Belief

In 2024, Women Peace Makers analyzed the status of freedom of religion and belief in Cambodia. ^[124] It found that religious freedoms, particularly for religious minorities, are often threatened despite Constitutional and other legal protections. Christian and Muslim participants in particular reported discrimination, harassment, and restrictions on their religious activities. Indigenous communities also faced restrictions in practicing their beliefs due to the destruction of sacred sites and land. Women from minority religious groups may also face intersecting forms of discrimination within society, impacting their access to education and employment. Challenges partially stemmed from the government favoring Theravada Buddhism, which is practiced by around 95% of the population.

The analysis further identified that beliefs across various religions perpetuate gender inequality, with women barred from some religious leadership roles and subject to discriminatory norms. The impacts of some religious practices can also undermine acceptance and perpetuate discrimination faced by LGBTIQ+ people.

The report recommends greater legal protection and awareness raising for the equal treatment of all religious groups, addressing gender and other forms of discrimination in religious contexts, greater interfaith dialogue, protection of Indigenous sites, and support for women and marginalized groups to participate in religious and public life.



¹²⁴ Women Peace Makers (2024) "Diving Deep Into Cambodia's Freedom of Religion and Belief", online: <https://wpmcambodia.org/project/diving-deep-into-cambodias-freedom-of-religion-and-belief/>.

Women & Girls in Detention

Cambodia's prison system continued to face severe overcrowding throughout 2024. Cambodia still has significant progress to make towards implementing the CEDAW Committee's 2019 recommendations to reduce the number of women in detention, address overcrowding and the root causes of delinquency, and improve conditions and services in detention facilities.^[125]

LICADHO monitors 19 out of the country's 29 prisons and correctional facilities. As of December 2024, 2,837 women and girls—out of a total of about 45,000 people—were detained in the prisons monitored by LICADHO. Cambodia's prison population has continued to grow, with the number of people detained in the facilities monitored by LICADHO increasing by 23% compared to the previous year.^[126]

The World Prison Brief ranked Cambodia as having the second-highest prison occupancy rate globally based on 2023 data.^[127] All except one of the prisons monitored by LICADHO exceeded its official capacity as of December 2024, with most at 200% to 650% capacity. These overcrowded conditions increased the risk of airborne and communicable diseases and exacerbated cramped and unhygienic conditions.

At-risk groups, such as pregnant women, minor girls, and children living alongside their mothers in prison, were often acutely affected.^[128] Cambodia permits young children aged below three to live with their mothers in prison. In 2024, 101 children (57 girls and 44 boys) were living with their mothers in the prisons LICADHO monitors, and a further 32 women were pregnant. A total of 97 minor girls—aged from 14 to 24 but who were younger than 18 at the time of allegedly committing an offense—were imprisoned at the year's end.

The living conditions for each of these groups could be drastically improved by addressing overcrowding, which is driven by the limited use of alternatives to detention and a systemic reliance on pre-trial detention. Notably, 77% of women in the prisons monitored by LICADHO had yet to be convicted or receive a final judgement.

¹²⁵CEDAW Committee, above n 2, para. 45 (a)–(c).

¹²⁶LICADHO, "Cambodia's Capacity Crisis: Overcrowded Prisons and the Need for Reform", February 18, 2025, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/articles/20250218/198/index.html>>.

¹²⁷World Prison Brief, "Highest to Lowest – Occupancy level (based on official capacity)", online: <https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/occupancy-level?field_region_taxonomy_tid=All>.

¹²⁸See, LICADHO, "Imprisonment Must be the Last Resort for Minors, Mothers With Children", May 31, 2024, online: <<https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=525>>.

Recommendations

Wide-ranging, ongoing actions are required to ensure the full promotion, protection, and enjoyment of women's, girl's, and non-binary peoples' rights in accordance with the CEDAW Convention and Committee's Concluding Observations. However, the following priority actions are suggested to the Cambodian government:

- Work at all levels of society and institutions to dismantle gender stereotypes surrounding the roles and responsibilities of women, men, girls, and boys. Ensure authorities' comments as well as laws and policies are not discriminatory and do not perpetuate gender stereotypes.
- Enact a comprehensive anti-discrimination law that guarantees a legal mechanism for enforcing women's rights, and covers direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- Allocate sufficient, dedicated and long-term human, technical, and financial resources from the national budget for the implementation of Cambodia's gender equity action plans, policies, and commitments.
- Increase women's representation in politics and lawmaking at the national, provincial, district, and commune levels to ensure equal representation through temporary special measures such as targeted positive action; preferential treatment; quota systems; and/or amending all relevant election laws to introduce mandatory legal requirements to alternate women and men on political party candidate lists, with women in first-ranked positions for 50% of each party's lists.
- End all forms of harassment, violence and intimidation against women political opponents, independent media outlets, journalists, land, labor and environmental activists and other women human rights defenders. Immediately release women human rights defenders and activists from prison, drop all charges against them, and reinstate revoked media licenses.
- Urgently and comprehensively overhaul the legal framework—especially the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims—to define and criminalize all acts of domestic violence and prohibit alternative dispute resolution in response to domestic violence.
- Strengthen GBV prevention programs and ensure comprehensive access to support services, including effective courts, protection orders and administrative decisions, legal representation, safe shelters, financial aid, healthcare, counseling, and others.
- Ratify the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and enact clear legal definitions and remedies for all forms of harassment.
- Amend the legal framework to explicitly legalize marriage equality and guarantee legal gender recognition by enabling a person to amend their name and gender marker in all identity documents.

- Effectively regulate microfinance institutions by preventing the pledging of Indigenous lands as collateral; enhancing protections against coerced land sales targeting marginalised women, including Indigenous and ID Poor women; and facilitate the establishment of a non-state, non-judicial independent grievance mechanism in-line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- Decriminalize sex work and repeal all punitive and discriminatory laws, policies and actions targeting sex workers and ensure that national laws differentiate between sex work and human trafficking. Ensure entertainment and sex workers have access to labor rights protections and quality healthcare services.
- Ensure access to CSE by all young people through adequate financial, human and technical resources for training, implementation, and monitoring in line with Cambodia's commitments.
- Ensure the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the 'Nelson Mandela Rules') and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the 'Bangkok Rules') are adhered to. Reduce overcrowding by utilizing alternatives to detention and limiting pre-trial detention to a measure of last resort.

Progress towards Implementation of 2019 CEDAW Concluding Observations



CoB Pera	Topics	Summary	2020 Rating	2021 Rating	2022 Rating	2023/2024 Progress	2024 Rating
6	SDGs	Recognize women as the driving force of sustainable development				Implemented.	
9a	Legislative framework	Definition of discrimination in law				Not implemented.	
9b	Legislative framework	Systemic gender impact assessments of laws				Not implemented.	
11a	Access to justice	Legal aid with long-term State funding; regional appeals courts				Partially implemented. Some legal aid funding is available, but it is insufficient and not long-term. There are four appeal courts across the country, with no new appeal courts established since 2020.	
11b	Access to justice	End stigma in response to women and girls reporting rights violations				The government with development partners implemented campaigns to encourage reporting of GBV cases, but stigmatization continues at all levels of society and institutions, including by law enforcement and the judiciary. There is no support for reporting State-perpetrated violence.	
11c	Access to justice	Disseminate remedy information				MoWA with others have disseminated information on the limited services available, including via a mobile "GBV Safe App" launched in 2024, but there is still limited support in obtaining effective judicial remedies.	
11d	Access to justice	Gender-responsive justice system; more women and training on CEDAW				The justice system is not yet gender responsive or gender sensitive. The representation of women in the judiciary remains low. Some capacity-building has been provided to judicial personnel and law enforcement.	



CoB Pera	Topics	Summary	2020 Rating	2021 Rating	2022 Rating	2023/2024 Progress	2024 Rating
11e	Access to justice	Impartial, independent judiciary; investigation and punishment of cases, including domestic violence and rape				The judicial system is not impartial or independent. Domestic violence and rape cases are not consistently investigated, and perpetrators often enjoy impunity. Alternative dispute resolution and out-of-court settlements are often misused, undermining access to justice and remedy.	
11f	Access to justice	Hold officials accountable for corruption				No progress.	
13a	Conflict	Redress to Khmer Rouge GBV victims				No progress.	
13b	Conflict	Action Plan on Security Council Resolution 1325				No dedicated Action Plan adopted.	
13c	Conflict	Women involved at all stages of peacebuilding				Some women have been involved at some stages of peacebuilding, but not within the full spectrum of the women, peace and security agenda.	
15a	National machinery	Autonomy for the Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW)				No change.	
15b	National machinery	National budget for full gender policy implementation				Resources and funding remain limited, insufficient, and not clearly allocated.	
15c	National machinery	Civil society participation in formulating national gender policy				Since the latest consultation with CSO in 2021/2022 there is no update on the progress and the document has not been shared.	
15d	National machinery	Effective M&E for policies, ministry gender activities				No concrete M&E mechanism established. However, there are some actions taken to monitor and evaluate the NAVAW III.	
17	National Human Rights Institution	Establish a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) per Paris Principles				The government proposed an NHRI in previous years, but there is no mechanism to ensure it upholds the Paris Principles. The current political and human rights environment would prevent any institution from being independent or effective.	



CoB Pera	Topics	Summary	2020 Rating	2021 Rating	2022 Rating	2023/2024 Progress	2024 Rating
19	Civil Society	Guarantee freedom of expression, assembly, and association				Cambodia continued to violate the rights of women human rights defenders, trade unionists, land and environmental activists, and political opponents.	
21a	Temporary Special Measures	Reallocate land for women's equal ownership				No efforts. Women continued to experience land grabbing and forced evictions.	
21b	Temporary Special Measures	Tenure security and adequate housing for women				Land grabbing, forced evictions, and resettlement at inadequate sites undermined access to tenure security and adequate housing.	
21c	Temporary Special Measures	Improved economic opportunities in rural areas with quotas				No temporary special measures.	
23a	Stereotypes	Comprehensive strategy to eliminate stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes				No comprehensive strategy. High-ranking officials continue to perpetuate discriminatory stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes regarding gender roles.	
23b	Stereotypes	Alternative ways to teach gender without referencing the Chbab Srey				No effort. The Chbab Srey is still taught in varying ways in schools.	
23c	Stereotypes	Promote positive attitudes toward gender equality, particularly among youth				The government continues to implement some social media and other public campaign activities that promote equality in some contexts.	
25a	GBV	Assess impact of measures and address root cause				Measures have not been systematically assessed. Prevention activities to address root causes remain limited. MoWA has implemented some campaign activities that promote equality.	
25b	GBV	Comprehensive review of DV Law; amend to criminalize all DV, facilitate protection orders and ensure effective remedies				A roadmap to review the DV Law has been developed but it has not been made public. There is no concrete information about when the law will be updated.	



CoB Pera	Topics	Summary	2020 Rating	2021 Rating	2022 Rating	2023/2024 Progress	2024 Rating
25c	GBV	Improve essential services				Access to quality, holistic services remains limited and insufficient. MoWA and the Ministry of Health launched guidelines on establishing One-Stop Service Units in 2024.	
25d	GBV	Systematically collect disaggregated GBV data				The Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2021–22 is the only source of systematically documented data on GBV.	
27a	Trafficking	Address root causes of trafficking, lack of economic opportunity				No progress.	
27b	Trafficking	Improve identification and referrals for victims				Cambodia launched an online trafficking victim identification course for officials. Impacts were undermined by a failure to meaningfully respond to human trafficking within online scam compounds and to properly identify trafficked people as victims.	
27c	Trafficking	Rehabilitation and social reintegration of victims				Protection, services and support remains limited, insufficient, and inaccessible. Some trafficked persons are subject to further harm and detention as they are classified as illegal immigrants.	
27d	Trafficking	Protect women from liability, witness protection				Some trafficked persons are subject to further harm and detention as they are classified as illegal immigrants.	
27e	Trafficking	Punish traffickers				There are no known prosecutions related to labor trafficking.	
27f	Trafficking	End misuse anti-trafficking law against non-traffickers				No progress.	
29a	Prostitution	Revise law to decriminalize sex work				No effort.	
29b	Prostitution	Punish exploiters				Some efforts.	
29c	Prostitution	Address root causes such as poverty, demand, inequality				No new efforts.	



CoB Pera	Topics	Summary	2020 Rating	2021 Rating	2022 Rating	2023/2024 Progress	2024 Rating
29d	Prostitution	Provide rehabilitation				No new efforts.	
31a	Political & public life	Adopt temporary special measures, such as quotas				No temporary special measures.	
31b	Political & public life	Create an enabling environment for women's participation				Participation is repressed. Women and marginalized groups remain underrepresented following the 2023 National Election and 2024 Senate Election.	
33a	Nationality	Access to nationality, education, employment, health care and housing for women of Vietnamese and Khmer Krom origin				Many women of Vietnamese origin and Khmer Krom women remain stateless and face barriers to accessing education, employment, healthcare and housing.	
33b	Nationality	Facilitate identity documentation and birth registration without confiscating documents				In 2023, Cambodia passed a new Law on Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identification (CRVSID Law) which may improve universal registration if implemented effectively and without discrimination.	
33c	Nationality	Ratify the two conventions on statelessness				No progress.	
35a	Education	Increase secondary school access; eliminate barriers to girls				Some ongoing efforts.	
35b	Education	Encourage girls in non-traditional fields of study, such as STEM				Some policies and programs have been enacted to encourage girls to study STEM subjects. However, participation remains limited.	
35c	Education	Comprehensive gender training for teachers				The Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan in Education 2021–2025 lists the CEDAW recommendations and teacher training in activities.	



CoB Pera	Topics	Summary	2020 Rating	2021 Rating	2022 Rating	2023/2024 Progress	2024 Rating
37a	Employment	Workers on fixed-duration contracts enjoy freedom of association and employment benefits; enforce 2-year cap on fixed-duration contracts				No effort. Fixed-duration contracts remain common, are used to undermine the right to freedom of association and assembly, and caps are not enforced.	
37b	Employment	Protect rights in informal employment sector, include domestic workers in Labor Law				Domestic and other informal workers are not explicitly protected under the Labor Law. Cambodia has taken some efforts to expand the National Social Security Fund to informal workers via workers' voluntary payments, but it is unclear if it is accessible and improving access to services without discrimination.	
37c	Employment	Promote sharing of parental duties, paternity leave				No new efforts.	
37d	Employment	Adopt comprehensive legislation on sexual harassment with remedies				No new efforts.	
37e	Employment	Ensure equal pay for work of equal value per ILO C100				No effort to compare different job categories with equal value. No consistent implementation of existing law on equal pay for same job.	
37f	Employment	Protect migrant workers abroad				Some trainings have been implemented, but migrant workers abroad still have limited protections and support.	
37g	Employment	Ratify ILO Conventions 183, 189, 190				No progress.	



CoB Pera	Topics	Summary	2020 Rating	2021 Rating	2022 Rating	2023/2024 Progress	2024 Rating
39a	Health	Universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services				The Roadmap Towards Universal Health Coverage in Cambodia 2024-2035 emphasizes the inclusion of SRHR within the essential health services package. However, implementation must be closely monitored to ensure effectiveness and accessibility for all. Currently, comprehensive SRHR are not enjoyed by everyone.	
39b	Health	Combat stigma against abortion and contraceptive use, including through CSE				Understanding of legal abortion and contraceptive use is increasing. However, confidence in accessing these services remains limited. Efforts have been made to increase access to CSE in schools, but significant progress remains necessarily.	
39c	Health	Address women's nutritional needs in strategies				No changes.	
39d	Health	Prevent and address cervical cancer				Since October 2023, HPV vaccines have been offered for free to all nine-year-old girls nationwide. Concerns remain about the lack of widespread information regarding the program, and potential impacts if development partners withdraw funding support.	
41	Rural women	Regulate microfinancing institutions and improve access to low-interest loans; support large women-owned businesses				The microfinance sector is not effectively regulated, with ongoing exploitative practices. The Cambodian government and international investors have not provided any meaningful relief or remedy to affected borrowers.	
43a	Climate change	Include women in policy formation				Limited inclusion of women's voices in policy formation, with no comprehensive gender analyses. Girls are broadly excluded from policy formation.	
43b	Climate change	Include explicit gender perspective in policies				Ongoing policy efforts.	



CoB Pera	Topics	Summary	2020 Rating	2021 Rating	2022 Rating	2023/2024 Progress	2024 Rating
45a	Women in detention	Reduce number of women in detention via alternatives to detention				No progress. Prison population continues to grow; alternatives to detention are not adequately considered or applied.	
45b	Women in detention	Address root causes, and account for effect on children of sentencing				No progress.	
45c	Women in detention	Improve conditions per Bangkok rules and Nelson Mandela rules; reduce overcrowding				No progress. Prisons far exceed official capacity rates undermining living conditions and access to essential services.	
47a	Surrogates	Repeal October 2016 decision to require surrogates to raise children as their own				No plan to reverse. Cambodia continued to detain and convict women acting as surrogates in 2024.	
47b	Surrogates	Address the root cause by improving income opportunities				No action.	
47c	Surrogates	Ensure laws, policies address power imbalance of surrogates				No progress.	
47d	Surrogates	Draft law should not criminalize surrogates				A law has not been finalized. Cambodia continued to convict women acting as surrogates in 2024.	
49a	Marriage	Targeted measures to reduce child marriage rates				Development partners and local organizations in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation and MoWA conducted some education campaigns and protection programs in Ratanakiri and Steung Treng provinces to prevent child marriage but efforts remained limited. Child marriage continued.	
49b	Marriage	Repeal Article 950 of the Civil Code				No effort to repeal.	

NGO-CEDAW is Cambodia's leading coalition dedicated to monitoring and promoting the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Founded in 1995, by Cambodian women activists energized by their participation in the Beijing World Conference on Women. NGO-CEDAW has grown from 9 founding organizational members to a coalition of 32 local member CSOs. Working with a wider network of 30 additional partner organizations, NGO-CEDAW gives voice to otherwise underrepresented groups of women and LGBTIQ+ communities.

The work of NGO-CEDAW includes: research; advocacy and lobbying; awareness-raising and capacity-building; and information exchange among its members. Specific activities include capacity development, an annual university debate, original art exhibitions, in-person advocacy at the UN, and workshops for coalition members and youth groups.

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