



NEWSLETTER



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Newsletter: 1st – 31st March 2016

A selection of the latest local news in Cambodia

Trade Union Law Developments



People protest against the draft trade union law in front of the National Assembly.

After eight years of drafting the union law, lawmakers on the National Assembly's labor commission held the latest round of a public forum to consult and debate about the controversial draft union law which included unions, employers and government officials from the CPP and CNRP.

There are still disagreements among all sides over the proposed rules for "forming, running and dissolving a union, reporting union finances and the threshold for a legal strike". Unions claimed that the law was designed to repress their activities and restrict their freedom and demanded changes, while the employers expressed concerns that the bill is not tough enough. Despite objections and criticism from unions, employers and the CNRP, that the bill would negatively impact Cambodia's heavily unionized garment sector - its largest source of exports -, the current draft of the trade union law will be put to a vote in the Parliament on April 4th.

Further reading:

Controversial Union Law Set for Final Review

By: Zsombor Peter and Khuon Narim | March 10, 2016
The Cambodia Daily

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/controversial-union-law-set-for-final-review-109689/>

Contested Trade Union Law Slated for Vote in Assembly

By: Khuon Narim | March 12, 2016
The Cambodia Daily

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<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/archives/contested-trade-union-law-slated-vote-assembly-109796/>

Union Law Sees Major Amendments Still Lacks Blessing of Workers
By Taing Vida | March 10, 2016
Khmer Times

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/22634/union-law-sees-major-amendments--still-lacks-blessing-of-workers/>

All sides air union law views
By Pech Sotheary | March 10, 2016
The Phnom Penh Post

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/all-sides-air-union-law-views>

Image Source:

http://www.phnompenhpost.com/sites/default/files/styles/full-screen_watermarked/public/field/image/3people_protest_the_draft_trade_union_law_at_the_national_assembly_in_phnom_penh_yesterday_09_03_2016_heng_chivoan.jpg?itok=Dv45i87p

Cabinet Reshuffle

Prime Minister Hun Sen announced a reshuffle of several high-ranking and government officials. Before sending the proposal to the National Assembly for adoption on 4th April, it will be examined by the Parliamentary Standing Committee. The reshuffle attempts to improve government



Prime Minister Hun Sen meets with the cabinet of ministers for a national budget meeting at the Peace Palace in 2013.

efficiency. According to Hun Sen’s initial announcement, followed by a few revisions, “two deputy prime ministers and one senior minister have been asked to retire, five ministers will take over different ministries and 10 government officials will be promoted to positions as secretaries of state at a variety of ministries”. Despite these changes, critics question the true impact towards efficiency improvements, as “the same faces taking up new titles”, and therefore doubt the reform would majorly affect government efficiency.

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Further reading:

Cabinet Reshuffle Just Cosmetic, Critics say

By Taing Vida | March 20, 2016

Khmer Times

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/22989/cabinet-reshuffle-just-cosmetic--critics-say/>

Four More Officials to Receive New Posts in Cabinet Reshuffle

By Kang Sothear | March 29, 2016

The Cambodia Daily

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/four-more-officials-to-receive-new-posts-in-cabinet-reshuffle-110534/>

Details of PM's cabinet shuffle announced

By Mech Dara | March 18, 2016

The Phnom Penh Post

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/details-pms-cabinet-reshuffle-announced>

More Moves Announced for Cabinet

By Taing Vida | March 28, 2016

Khmer Times

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/23299/more-moves-announced-for-cabinet-reshuffle/>

Image Source:

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/details-pms-cabinet-reshuffle-announced>

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Khmer Rouge Tribunal against Ta An



Ao An (Ta An) is a former Secretary of Sector 41 and Deputy Chief of Central Zone of Democratic Kampuchea.

Former Khmer Rouge official Ao An (called Ta An), who used to serve as a deputy secretary in the Central Zone of Democratic Kampuchea, has been originally charged with premeditated homicide and crime against humanity on 27 March 2015 by international co-investigating judge Mark Harmon after more than 5 years of investigation. Accord-

ing to a court press release, this month, he faces additional charges - charge of genocide and additional crimes against humanity by Michael Bohlander, co-investigating judge. Human rights groups such as Adhoc, expressed that the case against Ta An and other leaders currently not in detention has been carried on for too long but agree with Bohlander to push forward. However, the progresses of this case - case 004 - as well as case 004 remains unclear as both are strongly opposed by the government.

Further reading:

Khmer Rouge Leader Put under Investigation, as Case Progresses

By Pin Sisovann | March 15, 2016

<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/khmer-rouge-leader-put-under-investigation-as-case-progresses/3237266.html>

New charges brought against Ta An at KRT

By Alessandro Marazzi Sassoon | March 15, 2016

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/new-charges-brought-against-ta-krt>

KRT Charges Second Suspect in Case 004

By Holly Robertson | March 28, 2015

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/archives/krt-charges-second-suspect-in-case-004-80908/>

'Unwanted' Khmer Rouge Tribunal Cases Remain Stuck

By Sok Khemara | March 23, 2016

<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/unwanted-khmer-rouge-tribunal-cases-remain-stuck/3251088.html>

Image sources:

<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/unwanted-khmer-rouge-tribunal-cases-remain-stuck/3251088.html>

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Healthcare for Garment Workers

“Following the sub-degree to expand the social security and healthcare system for workers under the Labor Law”, the Ministry of Labor released a decree to begin the implementation of the social security’s healthcare insurance in Phnom Penh, Kandal and Kampong Speu. According to the decree,



A Garment worker receiving healthcare at Preah Kosamak Hospital

about 100,000 garment workers, employed in 66 factories which registered with the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) for health insurance, will be able to use the NSSF’s healthcare service from this May. The Cambodian garment and footwear industry is comprised of about 1,007 factories with around 754,188 workers. According to Mr Sum Sophorn, the NSSF deputy director, the service will be expanded to other provinces in 2017. NSSF provides “health services, medical benefits, medical care and also payment for staff who cannot work because of illness or a workplace accident, or because they are on maternity leave”. The healthcare is believed to greatly assist workers in receiving health services, but there is still a problem of receiving unprofessional health treatment.

Further reading:

Garment Workers to Begin Receiving Healthcare: Ministry
By Mom Kunthear | March 11, 2016
Khmer Times

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/22636/garment-workers-to-begin-receiving-healthcare--ministry/>

Government Moves to Expand Healthcare for Garment Workers
By Mom Kunthear | January 6, 2016
Khmer Times

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/19547/gov---t-moves-to-expand-healthcare-for-garment-workers/>

Cambodian garment workers to receive healthcare insurance
By Xinhua News Agency | March 11, 2016
Xinhua

<http://en.apdnews.com/xin-hua/355678.html>

Image Source:

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/22636/garment-workers-to-begin-receiving-healthcare--ministry/>

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New Rules for Civil Servants



Prime Minister Hun Sen (centre) presides over a meeting at the Council of Ministers.

A new rule regarding civil servants' attendance and working hours was adopted by the government at the Council of Ministers this month. The regulation aims to increase productivity, efficiency and accountability of civil servants by allowing for each ministry to set work schedules for their officials. The new rule also includes provisions to punish those who breach the regulation. By including a punishment provision, the new rule is be-

lieved to be able to promote accountability of every civil servant working in the government sector. However, critical voices are concerned that without an independent evaluation body set to oversee the implementation, the effectiveness of the new rule is still questionable and the accountability of the civil servants could hardly be realized.

Further reading:

New rules suggested for public employees

By Kong Meta | March 21, 2016

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/new-rules-suggested-public-employees>

Image source:

http://www.phnompenhpost.com/sites/default/files/styles/full-screen/public/field/image/hun_sen_presides_over_a_meeting_at_the_council_of_ministers_on_friday_where_a_new_civil_servants_sub-decree_was_released_18_03_2016_facebook.jpg?itok=zghwG96K

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Financial Literacy Campaign



A Woman displays cash at a money exchange shop on Street 63 in Phnom Penh.

According to Neave Chanthana, a deputy governor of the NBC, the rapid growth of microfinance institutions and the development of the financial sector in Cambodia “face challenges such as consumer protection, an overload of debt management, new products on the market which are confusing consumers and poses difficulties for the rural poor to access financial services”. In response to these

issues, NBC in cooperation with the Australian organization Good Return, has arranged a country-wide campaign called “Let’s talk about money” to educate the public and raise awareness for people, specifically young adults, to understand how to choose and use financial products properly. Corresponding to the growing needs for financial services and the development of the financial sector, the government, in cooperation with ADB, has developed a Financial Development Strategy which contributes to poverty alleviation and the improvement of people’s living standard. This campaign aims at changing financial attitudes and strengthening the right of families and communities by using financial services for low income earners and understanding the risk.

Further reading:

National Bank to Launch Financial Literacy Campaign

By Sok Chan | March 23, 2016

Khmer Times

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/22735/national-bank-to-launch-financial-literacy-campaign/>

Financial Sector Development Strategy 2011-2020

Ministry of Economy and Finance / National Bank of Cambodia | November 29, 2011

Asia Development Bank

<http://adb.org/sites/default/files/pub/2012/financial-sector-development-strategy-2011-2020.pdf>

Image Source:

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/22735/national-bank-to-launch-financial-literacy-campaign/>