

Reporters killed in Cambodia since 1994

យុត្តិធម៌សម្រាប់
អ្នកសារព័ត៌មាន!



JUSTICE FOR JOURNALISTS!

1994

- **Mr. THOU Char Mongkol / TOU Chom Mongkal / TOU Chhom Mongkol (June 10)** — Thou Char Mongkol was editor-in-chief of the privately owned bi-weekly *Antarakum* (Intervention) newspaper. He was found unconscious with a head injury/fractured skull on a road in Phnom Penh. Mongkol was taken to hospital where he died the following day (June 11th). The circumstances of the death remain unclear. The police initially claimed he was the victim of a traffic incident (one report states that the official police report identified the cause of death as a motorcycle collision with a bicycle taxi). However, a post mortem investigation showed that this was not possible as his body bore no other injuries and his motorcycle was unscathed. Prior to his death, *Antarakum* published a number of articles charging government and military officials with corruption. Some reports suggest that Mongkol may have been killed in connection with these articles. No one has been arrested in connection with Mongkol's death.
- **Mr. NUN Chan (September 6)** — Nun Chan was editor-in-chief of *Samleng Yuvachun Khmer* (Voice of Khmer Youth) newspaper. He was shot and killed by two unidentified gunmen in central Phnom Penh. The government condemned the killing but warned that “*a number of local newspapers ... have frequently published ... articles groundlessly accusing [the government's] leaders, personnel and officials of being involved in this or that issue.*” In September, the police arrested two suspects but the investigating judge issued a statement denouncing a confession from one of them that had been coerced and asking for further investigation. The paper had been highly critical of governmental authorities and had published articles about government officials allegedly

involved in corruption. Nun Chan received several official warnings and anonymous death threats for his coverage of government corruption.

- **Mr. CHAN Dara (December 8)** — Chan Dara was a reporter for the Khmer-language newspaper *Koh Santeheap* (Island of Peace) and also contributed to other publications. He was fatally shot in the eastern province of Kampong Cham, where he had been drinking with Colonel Sat Soeun. He was shot twice in the back at close range. Police later recovered the two bullets, which were from a K59 (9mm) pistol, and estimated that the assailant had fired the gun from one meter away. The Ministry of Interior police arrested Colonel Sat Soeun, who continued to send threats to the two papers (*Koh Santeheap* and *Preap Norn Sar*) and to Chan Dara's wife. However, the Colonel was released in May 1995 after a provincial judge acquitted him for lack of evidence.

1996

- **Mr. THUN Bun Ly (May 18)** — Thun Bun Ly was a writer and former editor of the opposition newspaper *Odom K'tek Khmer* (Khmer Ideal). He was also a prominent supporter of Sam Rainsy's *Khmer National Party* (KNP). He left his house in Phnom Penh around 10.30am and hailed a motorbike taxi. As the bike drove down Street 95, another motorbike carrying two men, sped by and one of them fired a pistol at Thun Bun Ly. Two bullets struck him in the chest and a third in his left arm. He fell to the ground and his driver fled. According to reports received by Amnesty International, Phnom Penh policemen went to the temple and, using sticks, dug the bullets out of his body. The whereabouts of these pieces of evidence were never disclosed and no one has ever been arrested or prosecuted for his killing. Prior to his death, Thun Bun Ly was convicted on two separate charges of defamation and disinformation for criticising the government in articles, letters to the editor, and cartoons.

1997

- **Mr. CHET Duong Daravuth (March 30)** — Chet Duong Daravuth was a reporter for the *Neak Prayuth* (The Fighter) newspaper. He was killed in a grenade attack on March 30th, 1997, while covering a Khmer National Party (KNP) rally outside the National Assembly, where opposition leader Sam Rainsy was speaking. Eyewitness reports suggest that four grenades were thrown into the crowd. According to Licadho's 2004 human rights report, 12 people were killed and approximately 200 injured. Numerous eyewitnesses reported that heavily armed soldiers (Hun Sen's personal bodyguards, the notorious 'Brigade-70') let two people throw grenades. According to US government sources, a report produced by an FBI team tentatively pinned responsibility for the blasts, and the subsequent interference, on Brigade-70. The report also indicated that the Cambodian police had advance knowledge of the attack.
- **Mr. PICH Em (May 4)** — Pich Em was a technician (and also an announcer according to some reports) at TVK station in Sihanoukville. He was killed during an attack on the station. Seven masked men reportedly using AK-47s and at least two B-40 rockets stormed the building. Pich Em was shot twice in the stomach and died the following day in hospital. Two other people were injured in the attack and most of the station's equipment was destroyed. Days before his death, the station had been asked by a senior provincial policeman to broadcast a political speech by a FUNCINPEC leader. The station refused. No one has been arrested in connection with the incident.
- **Mr. MICHAEL Sokhan / DOK Sokhan / MICHAEL Senior (July 7)** — Michael Sokhan was born in Cambodia and raised in Canada. He returned to Cambodia in 1995, where he worked as a television newscaster and English teacher. While taking pictures of soldiers looting a public market, he was shot by one of them in the knee. He apologised for taking the photographs. The soldiers killed him in front of his wife and brother-in-law. Nobody has been arrested or charged.
- **Mr. OU Sareoun (October 14)** — Ou Sareoun was a reporter for *Samleng Reas Khmer* (Voice of the Cambodian People) newspaper. At the time of his death, the newspaper had been investigating extortion in Central Market, Phnom Penh, and security guards had been the targets of the newspaper's investigation. He was dragged into the street by some of them as he was distributing newspapers to vendors in Central Market and shot dead. Official reports said he was drunk and had been killed in a dispute over a card game. The Khmer Journalists

Association, however, maintains that he was killed because of the newspaper's reporting. Police arrested the guard who shot Ou Sareoun, but he was later released and no charges were filed.

2003

- **Mr. CHOUR Chetharith (October 18)** — Chour Chetharith was deputy editor-in-chief of the royalist FUNCINPEC party's *Ta Prum* radio station. *Ta Prum* is known for its critical reporting of Prime Minister Hun Sen. At 8:15am, as Chour Chetharith was parking his car a few meters from Ta Prum radio station, a Honda C125 motorbike passenger fired a single shot at point blank range. Both FUNCINPEC and the Sam Rainsy Party claim it was a politically motivated attack. CCHR conducted an in-depth investigation into the killing and concluded that Chour Chetharith was killed because of his work as a journalist. No one has ever been arrested or prosecuted for his killing

2008

- **Mr. KHIM Sambo (July 11)** — Khim Sambo was a journalist with the opposition Sam Rainsy aligned Khmer - language daily, *Moneaseka Khmer*. He frequently wrote about allegations of government corruption and was heavily critical of Hun Sen and the Cambodian People's Party. On July 11th, 2008, Khim Sambo was shot three times while riding his motorcycle with his 21-year-old son, who was also shot twice while cradling his dying father. The two gunmen used a K-49 pistol with a silencer. Khim Sambo died immediately and his son died in hospital the following day. The Cambodian police officials said they had not identified a motive or suspects in the murder.

2012

- **Mr. HENG Serei Oudom (September 9-11)** — Heng Serei Oudom was a Cambodian journalist for the *Virakchun Khmer Daily* newspaper in Ratanakiri province. He was known for reporting on stories that involved illegal logging activities. Heng Serei Odom was found in the trunk of his own car, which was parked at a cashew plantation in the Ratanakiri province of Cambodia, on September 11, 2012. His wife reported him missing after he did not return from a meeting. According to Licadho's review statement, his body was hacked at least six times. This case is believed to be a premeditated murder as all his belongings were left untouched - therefore ruling out violent robbery. Ratanakiri police arrested two people accused of Mr. Heng Serei Oudom's murder: Mr. An Bunheng (alias "Eng") and his wife Mrs. Srim Srey Vy (alias "Vy"). They were both sent to prison, where Mrs. Srim Srey Vy admitted knowledge of the crime. On August 28, 2013, the Ratanakiri provincial court dropped the charges against them, concluding that Mr. Heng Serei Oudom was murdered at the house of the accused.

2014

- **Mr. CHAN Suon (February 1)** — Chan Suon, a reporter for *Meakea Kampuchea* was beaten to death outside his home in Kampong Chhnang the night of Saturday, Feb. 1. Initial reports indicate that around 10 men believed to be local fishermen accosted Chan Suon as he was leaving his house, throwing stones and beating him with a bamboo pole until he lost consciousness and died. The killing is believed to be a reprisal related to Chan's reporting on illegal fishing activities in the area.