



Challenges for Independent Media

2015

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Executive Summary

The year 2015 saw a slight reprieve in the violence against journalists that marred the previous year, when two journalists were murdered in the line of work, but simultaneously saw an uptick in the prosecutions of netizens for speaking their mind on the Internet, and Facebook in particular. Among those prosecuted for engaging in online free expression in 2015 were opposition lawmakers, students and a migrant worker.

Though journalists have so far avoided lawsuits related to reports posted online, the prosecutions of citizens have had a chilling effect, with 58% of those surveyed in CCIM's Annual Attitudes Survey of Professional Journalists saying they did not feel completely free to report on all subjects without fear of interference or repercussions – a more than 10% increase over the year before. Strikingly, almost a third of journalists who did not always feel free to report said they felt that way due to pressure from their own editors, producers, publishers or news outlet owners, and the majority of journalists (53%) said their news outlet was not completely independent, or free from influences by political or business interests.

Despite these concerns over the lack of media independence and the rise in self-censorship, the majority of journalists included in the survey saw the country's media industry as steadily improving. Almost 71% of those surveyed for the 2015 report agreed that the media sector was headed in the right direction, again representing a more positive view than the year before, during which just 63% of journalists took a positive view of their industry's progress.

As with the 2014 survey, a number of journalists in this year's research pointed to the Internet as their source of optimism for the future of Cambodian media. The Internet is the country's fastest-growing medium and in 2015 reached 39% of the population, overtaking radio's No. 2 slot for audience and reach. The Internet is now exceeded in its reach only by television, which maintains a nearly 96% penetration rate. However, despite the promise posed for independent media by the rise of the Internet, optimism should be tempered by the reality of increasing efforts to restrict online free speech, including the draft Cybercrime Law, as well as by the fact that only about 24% of Internet users report

FIGURE 1 : Key Findings

Key findings of CCIM's Annual Attitudes Survey of Professional Journalists include:

- 71% felt Cambodia's industry sector is headed in the right direction, up from 63% the year before
- 53% said their news outlet was not completely independent
- 58% did not feel free to report on all subjects without fear of interference or repercussions
 - Interference came from local authorities (71%) and from within their own news rooms (32%)
 - Politics and politicians were the most difficult subject for journalists to report on independently, followed by the courts and land concessions.
- 44% felt the majority of journalists in Cambodia failed to conduct themselves with sufficient professionalism.
- 78% believed an Access to Information Law would improve their ability to do their job as a journalist.
 - Records of land sales/concessions were currently the most difficult information to obtain, followed by national and local government budgets
- 40% pointed to low salaries as the most important problem facing journalists, with 44% making less than a living wage (\$200 USD per month).

using the medium to access news and information, according to recent research.

Overall, the progress made toward increased media independence in 2015 was mixed. While journalists expressed optimism about the direction in which their sector was heading, at least part of their optimism was linked to the rise of the Internet, which is increasingly under threat. Other sources of optimism included the reduction in killings and violence against journalists as compared to the year before, but this reduction comes at a time when journalists reported increasingly engaging in self-censorship, raising concerns that journalists' optimistic outlook for their sector may not be entirely merited, and that efforts to produce uncensored, independent media might still be met with opposition in the future.

Methodology

The Challenges for Independent Media 2015 report aims to identify and analyze barriers to the development of an independent and pluralistic media in Cambodia while also summarizing violations of press freedom over the past year. This report incorporates data from the CCIM media monitoring and expert analysis in the area of press freedom along with perspectives of professional journalists, as measured via CCIM's Annual Attitudes Survey of Professional Journalists.

Annual Attitudes Survey

The Annual Attitudes Survey 2015 was conducted from Date to Date and gathered data from 102 professional journalist respondents. Journalists were selected in order to meet quotas related to geography, gender and nationality, and to ensure maximum diversity of mediums (radio, TV, newspaper, online, etc.) and publications. In total, journalists from 43 news outlets were surveyed.

The survey consisted of up to 48 questions and could be taken online via the Survey Monkey platform or administered in-person or via phone by CCIM researchers, depending on respondent preferences. Researchers collected additional qualitative data including quotations and anecdotal evidence from respondents who chose to take the survey in person or via phone. Respondents were likewise given the option of completing the survey in either Khmer or English language. Of the 106 respondents who started the survey, four failed to complete the survey in its entirety and were therefore removed from the final data set, for a final tally of 102 respondents.

Survey Demographics

Journalists

Journalists surveyed for this study represented 22 out of Cambodia's 25 provinces, with only Banteay Meanchey, Pailin and Siem Reap provinces unrepresented. Though the largest number of respondents (48 or 27.1%) were from the capital city of Phnom Penh, where the majority of news outlets are headquartered, 52.9% were from other provinces. Of the 102 journalists surveyed, 30 were female (29%). The average age of respondents was 34, while the median age was 31.

Respondents' years of experience in professional journalism ranged from one year to 34 years, with the average experience rate at just under eight years. Respondents were mainly employed as full-time staff reporters or photographers (42.2%), part-time staff reporters or photographers (29.4%), editors or producers (11.7%), or owners or publishers (5.9%).

News Outlets

The 102 professional journalists surveyed for this study worked for 43 news outlets, including radio (9.8%), television (31.4%), newspapers (51%), magazines (2%) and online outlets (12.7%). The majority of journalists worked for news outlets that publish in Khmer language (94.1%), followed by English (20.6%), though other languages were also represented, including Chinese (2.9%), and German (1.0%). Likewise, the majority of journalists worked for outlets distributing on a national level (70.6%), though a minority reported that their news was distributed internationally (22.5%) or only on a local level (6.9%).

AT A GLANCE: Survey Demographics

FIGURE 2

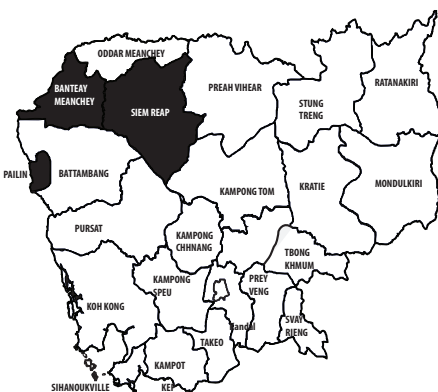


FIGURE 3

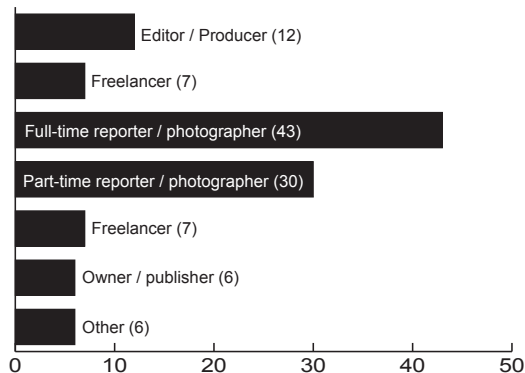
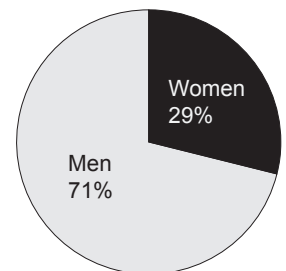


FIGURE 4



Cambodian Media Landscape

Cambodia generally ranks near the bottom of worldwide press freedom indices due to government control and influence over the media, threats and violence against journalists, and self-censorship by media practitioners. This trend continued in 2015, with Cambodia’s media sector being categorized as “Not Free” by Freedom House and receiving a rank of 139 out of 180 countries worldwide by Reporters Without Borders. Though the latter ranking does mark a slight improvement over 2014, when Cambodia was ranked at 144 out of 180 countries, the increase is mostly attributable to a general worldwide decline in press freedom than to any improvement in the Cambodian situation, with the country’s individual score improving by less than one point.

Nonetheless, the majority of journalists interviewed in this survey tended to believe that Cambodian media was improving, with 70.6% saying the sector is headed in the right direction. As with the 2014 study, a number of journalists attributed their optimism to the Internet’s increasingly prominent role in the way news is gathered, reported and consumed. And while more Cambodians than ever are turning to the Internet for news and information, the independence of the country’s mainstream media outlets, including print, radio and television, continue to be hampered by issues including the concentration of ownership and audiences, and political influence over journalists.

Print Media

Cambodia’s print media sector is by far the country’s least popular medium and is also among the most partisan, second only to television in terms of political ownership. The Media Ownership Monitoring (MOM) project, a joint effort by CCIM and Reporters Without Borders to increase transparency around media

ownership in Cambodia, found the country’s print media to be highly concentrated. Out of the 460 print publications registered with the Ministry of Information, only 50 are actively publishing, and of those 50, the top four outlets claiming 57% of readership. Moreover, the project found that the print market is dominated by CPP-affiliated outlets. Of the top four print publications, three (75%) are owned by individuals or entities affiliated with the ruling party.

However, print media remains the least popular way for Cambodians to get their news. Recent market research has shown that only 11% of Cambodians have ever read a newspaper or magazine, and, moreover, that most of the regular print readership is limited to urban populations or educated elites.

This low level of print readership calls into question the medium’s efficacy as an influencer of public opinion and may help explain why outlets perceived as being among the country’s most independent – including The Cambodia Daily and The Phnom Penh Post, ranked No. 2 and 3, respectively, in this year’s survey of journalists – have been allowed to operate with comparatively low levels of interference, despite publishing content critical of the government in both English and Khmer languages.

Television Media

Television is the most popular form of media in Cambodia, reaching 96% of the country’s population. However, it is also the country’s most concentrated media sector, both in terms of ownership and audience shares, according to findings of the MOM project. Cambodia currently has 18 television stations, but the top four stations claim 78% of viewers.

Additionally, of the 10 most popular stations, the MOM research found that eight (80%) are owned by individuals politically affiliated with the CPP, including government employees and advisers. Professional journalists included in this year’s attitudes study had overwhelmingly low opinions of television news outlets’ independence, with only one TV stations (Hang Meas) making it into the top 10 in the ranking of perceived independence.

Though the television sector showed promise of diversifying its ownership in 2014, when the opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) was promised radio and television licenses as part of a political deal to end its year-long boycott of the National Assembly, these stations have yet to begin broadcasting.

FIGURE 5 : Media Penetration

Media platforms are ranked according to their penetration rate among the general population and the percent of people using each medium to access news and information

Media Sector	General Penetration	Using for News & Information
1 Television	96%	30%
2 Internet	39%	24%
3 Radio	35%	20%
4 Print	11%	unknown

Despite the ruling party's domination of television news outlets, the majority of Cambodians use TV to access entertainment programming such as comedy shows and concerts, with recent studies showing that only about a third of the population uses the medium to access news and information. The country's two TV news stations attract only 2% of the audience share.

Radio Media

Radio continues to lose ground to the Internet in terms of popularity and audience share and is now the third most popular medium in the country. Recent research has shown that roughly 35% of Cambodians listen to radio. At the same time, it is the most diverse of the traditional media sectors, with one dominant station, ABC Cambodia, claiming roughly 25% of the market share, followed by nine other stations with roughly equal listenership.

The country's radio stations boast a politically diverse range of programming, from pro-CPP stations such as Bayon FM to opposition-aligned outlets such as Beehive Radio. Critically, the country's airwaves are also home to a number of popular independent news programs including Voice of Democracy (VOD) on Sarika FM, ranked as the No. 1 media outlet for independence in the survey of professional journalists' perceptions, as well as Radio France International (No. 4), Voice of America (No. 5), Radio Free Asia (No. 6) and the Women's Media Center (No. 7). The abundance of radio outlets in journalists' ranking of the top ten most independent news sources (5 of 10) speaks measures about the professionalism and trustworthiness of the radio sector.

Internet

The online market is one of the most crowded industries in Cambodia, with 31 Internet Service Providers licensed and 7 active phone operators able to provide online data plans, according to information obtained by the MOM project from the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications. Recent research has shown that 39% of Cambodians are exposed to online media, making the Internet the second most popular media sector in the country after television. It is also the fastest growing sector, increasing from just 25% penetration in 2014.

Facebook is by far the most-visited website in Cambodia, and anecdotal evidence suggests that for many Cambodians – and particularly those new to the Internet – Facebook serves as their only point of contact with the web, with all media content being viewed through the Facebook platform. The MOM project found that news websites (those primarily focused

FIGURE 6 : Independence Scores

Respondents ranked their perception of Cambodian media outlets' independence on a scale from 1 ("Never Independent. They always promote certain business or political interests.") to 5 ("Always independent and unbiased."). The average ranking of each outlet appears in the table below:

Publication	Score	
1 VOD	4.196	
2 Cambodia Daily	4.173	
3 Phnom Penh Post	4.171	
4 RFI	4.067	
5 VOA	4.032	
6 RFA	3.889	
7 WMC	3.466	
8 Khmer Times	2.930	
9 Hang Meas	2.686	
10 Koh Santepheap	2.104	
11 CNC	2.046	
12 Rasmei Kampuchea	1.978	
13 Kampuchea Thmey	1.956	
14 CTN	1.875	
15 SEATV	1.848	
16 Apsra	1.841	
17 Beehive	1.810	
18 TV3	1.803	
19 TVK	1.748	
20 TV9	1.724	

on providing political or societal news) are not at all popular, with only 10 of the country's 100 most-visited sites being dedicated to news and information.

Of those 10 most popular sites, just four (40%) are owned by individuals affiliated with the government or ruling party, indicating that the Internet presents a more hospitable environment for independent news. This is partially due to the lack of regulations in the sector, with the Internet currently positioned as the country's least regulated media sector.

However, ongoing debates over a draft Cybercrime Law, which would restrict online freedom of expression, as well as numerous instances over the past year of the government using existing legal provisions to crack down on those who express dissent online pose a threat to the continuance of the Internet's position as a facilitator of free press in Cambodia. (See "Government Control & Influence section for more information.)

Challenges for Independent Media

The Challenges for Independent Media 2015 report is informed by the perspectives of the country's leading media professionals, as measured via CCIM's Annual Attitudes Survey of Professional Journalists. Insight from journalists is paired with data from CCIM media monitoring and expert analysis to create a comprehensive picture of the state of media independence in Cambodia from year to year.

Violence & Physical Harassment

Journalists in Cambodia are regularly subject to threats and attacks. Among the 102 media professionals surveyed for CCIM's 2015 Attitudes Survey of Professional Journalists, 25.5% reported having been attacked due to their work as a journalist. This represents an increase over the 2014 study, in which only 17.1% of respondents had been attacked. Reporters who provided anecdotal evidence about their attacks most commonly pointed to stories or investigations on illegal logging, corruption and land disputes as the issues prompting the attacks.

One journalist reported being shot while reporting on illegal logging. Another reported having a grenade thrown into his home after his report on a criminal investigation. Interestingly, foreign and Khmer journalists experienced near-identical levels of violence on the job, mainly due to post-election protests in 2013 and 2014, when journalist of all nationalities were targeted during police crackdowns.

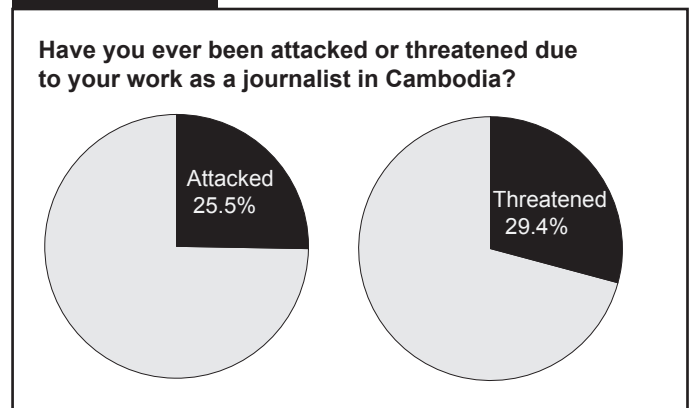
A slightly higher number of journalists – 29.4% – reported being threatened in the line of work. Reporters who had been threatened cited similar reasons as those who had been attacked, including illegal logging, corruption and land grabbing reports. A number of reporters faced death threats at the hands of illegal loggers or were even confronted with guns.

A Cambodian television reporter told CCIM, "Journalists are threatened by criminals that we have only pens, so [we must] be careful."

"Journalists are often threatened by criminals that we have only pens, so [we must] be careful."

- Cambodian TV reporter -

FIGURE 7 : Threats & Attacks



The prevalence of threats against journalists covering environmental issues supports Reporters Without Borders' recent findings that Cambodia is the most dangerous place in the world for environmental journalists.

Prosecution & Legal Threats

Though journalists are seldom officially charged with criminal acts such as defamation (only one journalist of the 102 surveyed reporting having been charged), threats of prosecution remain commonplace and serve as an effective deterrent for many reporters. Of the journalists surveyed who reported having been threatened in the line of work, 26.6% had received threats that were explicitly legal in nature.

No journalists were brought up on charges for their work in 2015, but everyday citizens faced an increasingly hostile legal environment for online free speech, with three citizens and one lawmaker arrested and charged in 2015 for comments made on social media (see Government Control & Influence for more).

Self-censorship

The physical and legal repercussions journalists face for reporting on controversial topics have the intended and frightening side effect of pushing some journalists to self-censor, or refrain from covering sensitive issues as a means of shielding themselves from attacks and harassment. It's a problem that is increasingly common, according to CCIM's Attitudes Survey of Professional Journalists, with 58% of journalists surveyed in 2015 reporting they do not feel completely free to report on all subjects without fear of interference or repercussions – up from just 47.3% in 2014.

The topics journalists identified as being most difficult to report on included: Politics and politicians; courts;

land concessions; border issues; laws and policies; and corruption. Journalists surveyed for this study said they did not feel completely free to report on these topics due to interference or fear of repercussions from a number of sources, including local authorities (71%), business owners (31%), politicians (19%), and even their own editors, producers, publishers and news outlet owners (32%). The fact that almost a third of journalists report facing interference from within their own news outlets serves as further evidence of the significant barriers impeding development of an independent media environment in Cambodia.

Even in cases where newsroom management is not actively hindering journalists' work, many journalists lack confidence that their news organization will provide them with critical support in the case of an emergency related to their work, potentially contributing to self-censorship. Less than a third of journalists surveyed reported being "very confident" that their employers would provide them with legal representation, in-country medical treatment, medical evacuation or relocation to a safe house if needed.

Government control & influence

Government interference in Cambodia's media sector remains one of the most critical roadblocks to the development of an independent and pluralistic media environment. This interference comes in many forms, including direct ownership of the media, pressure on owners and publishers, and regulatory and licensing controls. The result is a press that journalists acknowledge as lacking in independence. Of journalists surveyed for this study, the majority (53%) said their news outlet was not completely independent, or free from political or business interests.

Licensing

Continued government control over the media is largely enabled by the Ministry of Information's licensing process, which lacks political independence and transparency, resulting in the consolidation of ownership – particularly of broadcast media – in the hands of the politically connected.

Though the issuance of radio and television licenses to the CNRP following political negotiations in 2014 showed potential to open up the nation's broadcast media to a more diverse set of political views, these stations have yet to go online. Moreover, the ministry's normal licensing procedures continue to lack transparency. No other independent or anti-government broadcasters have been issued licenses, while notable anti-government broadcasters, like Mom Sonando's Beehive Radio, and independent media outlets, such as CCIM's VOD news programming, have been routinely denied licenses to start up or expand their media outlets.

FIGURE 8 : Sensitive topics

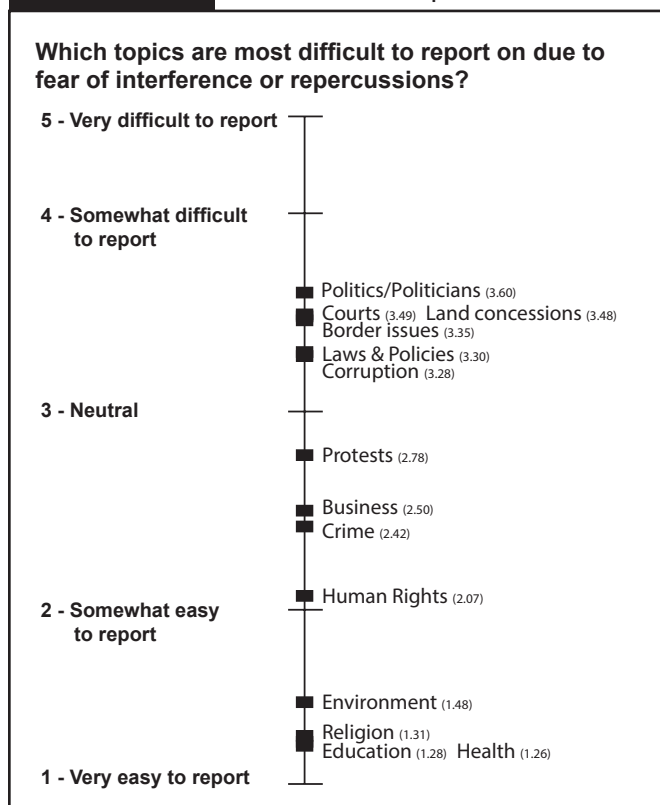


FIGURE 9 : Repercussions

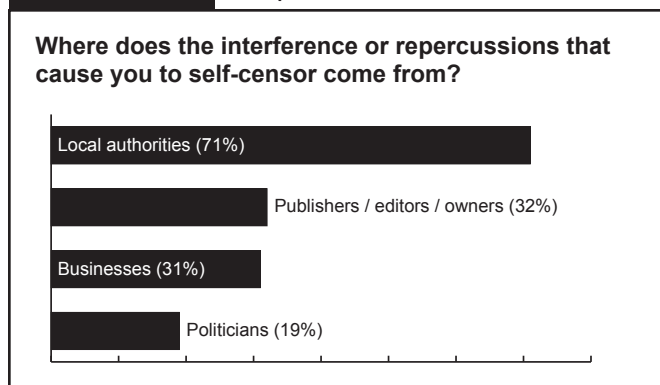
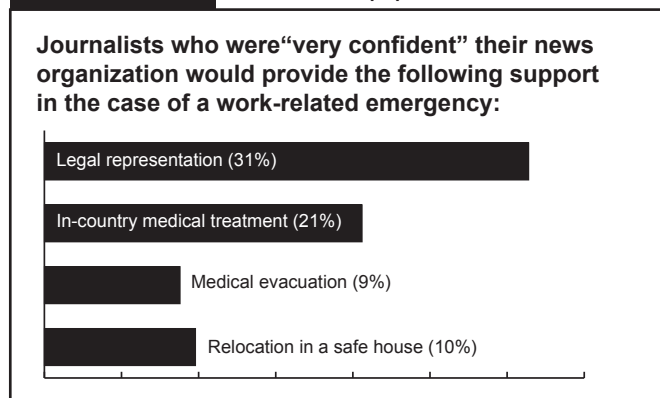


FIGURE 10 : Crisis support



Regulatory & legal environment

Though 2014 was marked by hopes of a loosening government grip on media, as the Ministry of Information granted television and radio licenses to the opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party, those hopes were soon dashed as the government sought to regain control of the country's media – and particularly online media – throughout 2015.

Internet freedom

The controversial Cybercrime Draft Law of 2014 was “scrapped” just eight months after it was leaked to the public, and though the legislation may have been pushed to the side, the government's intentions of increasing its control over online free speech were not.

2015 saw a record number of prosecutions and other actions taken against social media users who expressed critical opinions of the ruling party or government officials online:

- Opposition **MP Um Sam An** was banned from 15 National Assembly sessions and saw his pay cut in half for two months in July after posting comments on Facebook deemed to be insulting of the National Assembly president.
- Despite his immunity, opposition **Senator Hong Sok Hour** was arrested and charged with fraud and incitement in August after posting an allegedly forged treaty on Facebook in August. Sok Hour remains in jail, with his bail requests denied by the Phnom Penh Municipal Court and the Appeals Court.
- Khemarak University student **Kong Raya** was arrested and charged with incitement in August after posting a Facebook status about political change that referenced a “color revolution.” Raya remains in prison awaiting trial. He faces up to three years' imprisonment if convicted.
- Recent university graduate **Tao Savoeun** was arrested in September after posting a comment on Facebook threatening to bomb a graduation ceremony at which the Deputy Prime Minister was scheduled to speak. Savoeun was arrested the day after the graduation ceremony, which took place without incident. Savoeun was convicted of the death threat in October and sentenced to a suspended 15-month prison term.

“The Telecommunications Law appears to be nothing short of an attempt to establish overarching central control over Cambodia's Internet and telecommunications infrastructure.”

- LICADHO: “Going Offline?” -

- Migrant worker **Phong Seiha** was arrested in September after allegedly posting a death threat on Facebook against a scholar tasked with researching demarcation of the Cambodian-Vietnamese border. Seiha remains in prison awaiting trial. He faces up to two years' imprisonment if convicted.

It is unclear whether this increase in government actions against social media users is related to the Cyber War Team formed by the Council of Ministers in December 2014, which had the express purpose to “protect the government's stance and prestige,” according to Deputy Prime Minister Sok An. In September 2015, the government announced further expansions of its efforts to police online speech, creating an Anti-Cybercrime Department within the Ministry of Interior tasked with cracking down on online crime, including speech-related crimes of incitement, insulting and racism.

Moreover, the Cybercrime Draft Law is firmly back on the government's agenda, and as of July 2014, was in the drafting stages at the Ministry of Interior. Though the current draft is missing some of the more draconian measures against free speech that were so widely criticized in the 2014 version, actions throughout 2015 have proven that the government does not necessarily need a Cybercrime Law to stifle online dissent.

Telecommunications Law

The draft Telecommunications Law, as currently pending in the Cambodian National Assembly, gives the government broad spying powers over Internet and phone communications. A

LICADHO report on a previous but similar version of the draft law stated that the law “appears to be nothing short of an attempt to establish overarching central control over Cambodia's Internet and telecommunications infrastructure.” In addition to legitimate human rights concerns generated by the draft, the law also presents troubling ramifications for journalists, whose investigative arsenal could be limited by eavesdropping provisions that prohibit any unapproved recording. Moreover, journalists could find their sources drying up as whistle-blowers hesitate to step forward for lack of secure and private channels through which to share their information. As unofficial leaks of information and documents are a primary means for journalists to secure public information given the lack of transparency in most government ministries, any law that discourages whistle-blowing could drastically reduce the amount of government information available to the public.

Law on Associations & NGOs

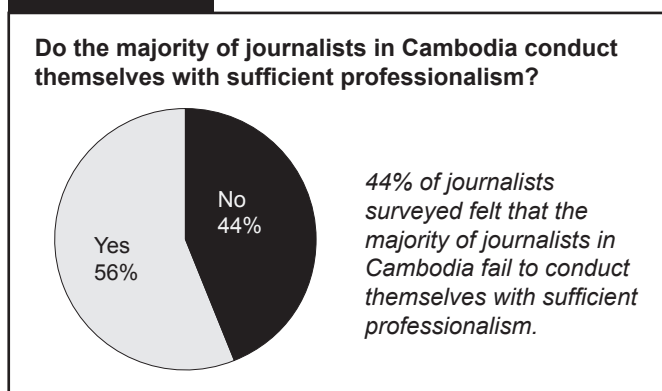
Aside from its obvious and widely criticized implication for Cambodian civil society, the Law on Associations and NGOs (LANGO), as passed in 2015, could also have wide-reaching effects for Cambodian media. The law's stipulation that NGOs must remain politically neutral could limit organizations' ability to speak to the press about human rights abuses and other politically sensitive topics. Because of the difficult situation for access to information in Cambodia, human rights groups are sometimes the only source of reliable information on issues such as government budgets and land disputes, and any restrictions on their ability to share their information with the press could tremendously impede the press and citizens' right to freedom of information.

Lack of professionalism & ethics

Not all challenges for the Cambodian media come from the outside. Widespread corruption and poor ethical practices remain commonplace among journalists working in Cambodia, tainting public perception of the news media and giving government officials a foothold for condemning or dismissing pieces of journalism critical of government policies and practices.

In CCIM's 2015 survey of professional journalists, 44% of respondents said they believed the majority of journalists do not conduct themselves with sufficient professionalism. This scathing indictment of the country's journalists by their own peers indicates the scale of the problem of journalism ethics in Cambodia. When asked to explain the reasons behind journalists' unethical practices, respondents blamed three main factors: Journalists' low salaries (57%), lack of training or education (11%) and, more generally, a culture of corruption in Cambodia (16%).

FIGURE 11 : Professionalism



Low salaries

When asked to identify the most important problem facing journalists today, 40% of journalists surveyed pointed to their low salaries as the No. 1 issue. CCIM's survey of professional journalists revealed that 44% of journalists working in Cambodia make less than the \$283 USD monthly living wage as identified by the Asia Floor Wage Association. Moreover, close to a third of journalists reported making less than \$150 USD per month. However, when looking only at full-time journalists and excluding freelancers and part-time reporters, these rates decrease, to only around one-third being remunerated at rates below the living wage level and just 17.6% being paid less than \$150 USD per month. When asked to gauge their level of satisfaction with their salary level, only half of respondents reported being "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with their salary level.

In terms of salary differences, foreign journalists received higher salaries than their Cambodian counterparts, with all, full-time foreign journalists receiving monthly

AT A GLANCE: Media workers' salaries

MAKING ENDS MEET

Professional journalists in Cambodia make relatively low salaries. 44% of media workers surveyed reported making less than \$200 USD per month — meaning that they are living below the living wage line set by the Asia Floor Wage organization, leaving them susceptible to engaging in corruption to make ends meet.

Salary rates in the graph at right are presented on a monthly basis.

FIGURE 12

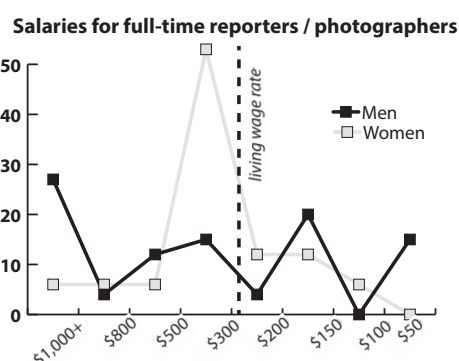


FIGURE 13

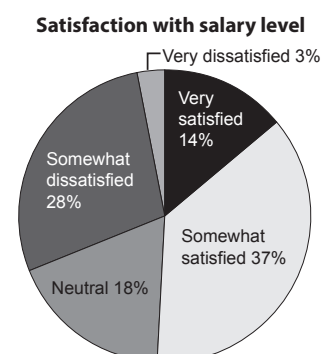


FIGURE 14: Journalist benefits

Respondents to CCIM's Attitudes Survey of Professional Journalists reported receiving the following benefits in addition to salary from their news outlet:

Benefit	Labor law	N	%
Health insurance	Not required	37	36.3%
Worker's compensation (NSSF)	Mandated	27	26.5%
Retirement savings	Not required	12	11.8%
Overtime pay	Mandated	25	24.5%
Paid national holidays	Mandated	35	34.3%
Paid personal / annual leave	Mandated	34	33.3%
Paid sick leave	Mandated	36	35.3%
Paid maternity leave	Mandated	33	32.4%

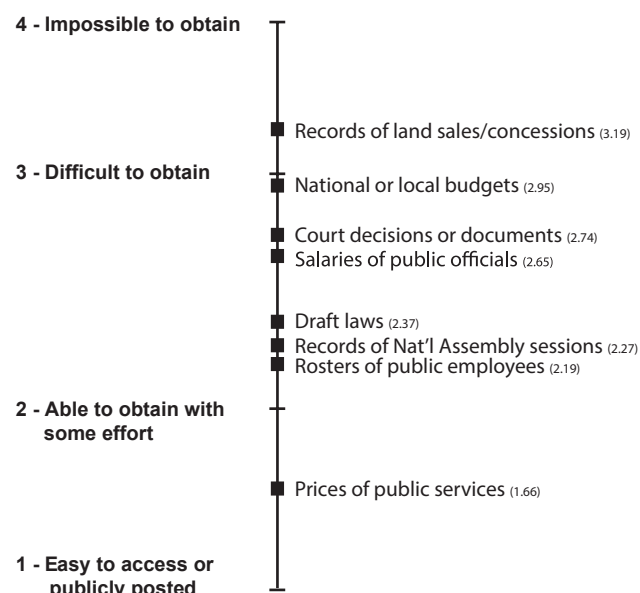
FIGURE 15: Continued training

Commonly requested areas of continued journalism skills training included:

Training Topic	N	%
Political reporting	92	90.2%
Media law	39	38.2%
Journalism ethics	24	23.5%
News writing	23	22.5%
Access to Information	18	17.6%
Data & researching	14	13.7%
Investigative reporting	13	12.7%

FIGURE 16: Access to Information

Which topics do you find it most difficult to access information on for your reporting?



salaries of at least \$800 USD per month. At the same time, foreign journalists were significantly more likely to hold university degrees, with 78% holding a bachelor's degree or higher, as opposed to 46% of Cambodian journalists.

In addition to low wages, many journalists reported that their employers do not provide benefits mandated by Cambodian labor law including worker's compensation (at least 57% did not receive), overtime pay (at least 66.7% did not receive), paid national holidays (at least 58.7% did not receive) and more. Only 40% of respondents reported being "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with the benefit package provided by their news organization.

Nonetheless, when asked to rank their overall level of job satisfaction, the overwhelming majority of respondents (80.4%) reported being "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with their jobs.

Lack of training or education

Journalists also self-identified lack of training or education as a factor contributing to unethical practices by journalists in Cambodia. Journalists surveyed for this study had a higher level of education than the general public, with 46.8% having attained some type of university degree. However, of these degree holders, only 11.7% held a degree in journalism or another relevant area, meaning many likely missed out on key lessons in journalism ethics.

Despite the general lack of advanced journalism studies, the overwhelming majority of journalists surveyed (84.3%) had attended some type of continuing training in journalism or relevant skills. Notably, 28.4% had attended five or more such trainings during their careers, and 97.1% expressed a desire to receive additional training in the future. Political reporting was by far the most in-demand topic among journalists surveyed, with 90.2% of respondents requesting additional training in this area. Other areas of training most commonly requested by respondents included media law (38.2%), journalism ethics (23.5%) and news writing (22.5%).

Lack of Access to Information

Journalists' inability to access government information for their reporting – including information that should be public, such as budgets and draft laws – creates a substantial roadblock for journalists and the public alike. When asked to identify the subjects that were most difficult to gather information on, reporters singled out records of land sales and concessions as the most difficult, followed by national or local budgets, court decisions or documents, salaries of public officials, draft laws, records of National Assembly sessions and rosters of public employees.

Perspectives on the Access to Information Law

The Cambodian Ministry of Information is currently drafting an Access to Information Law in consultation with various government bodies and civil society groups. Though efforts to draft such a law have proven touch and go since first introduced in 2010, the majority of journalists surveyed in CCIM's 2015 Attitudes Survey of Professional Journalists were optimistic about the law's potential. In total, 78% of journalists surveyed said they believed an Access to Information Law would improve their ability to do their job as a journalist.

Nonetheless, some still expressed doubt, with 18% saying a law would not improve the situation for media. One foreign journalist working at an English-language news outlet said there is "no political will at all" to enforce such a law, suggesting that the drafting effort is owed to international pressure and funding rather than any real drive toward transparency.

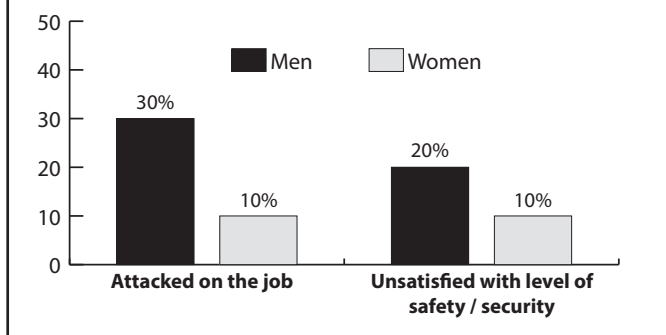
Gender perspectives

On most matters of opinion, female and male journalists showed no notable statistical difference. For instance, both men and women overwhelmingly thought that Cambodia's media sector is heading in the right direction. Reporters of both sexes likewise agreed that low pay is the most important problem facing journalists in Cambodia today.

However, men and women displayed a few notable differences related to salary and security issues. In terms of salary, women working as full-time reporters or photographers were substantially less likely than their male counterparts to make the highest level salaries of \$1,000 to \$1,999 USD per month. This inequality comes despite the fact that women in the sample size were more likely to have a university degree, with 94% of women and only 46% of men having achieved a bachelor's degree or higher. However, female respondents were also significantly less experienced than their male counterparts, on average having accumulated just over

FIGURE 17: Safety & security

Men were three times more likely than women to have been attacked due to their work and were overall less satisfied than women with their level of security.



two years' experience, as opposed to male reporters' average of almost 10 years. The high levels of education among young, entry-level female journalists provides hope that these women will go on to achieve higher salary levels and newsroom leadership positions after attaining additional reporting experience.

At the same time, despite their comparative lack of experience, women were less likely than men to make salaries below the living wage level of \$289 USD per month, perhaps explaining why male, full-time reporters were more than 20% more likely to indicate some level of dissatisfaction with their salary their female counterparts.

Women also displayed differences from their men in the areas of safety and security. According to their own self-reporting, female journalists were three times less likely to be attacked on the job than were male journalists, with 10% of women and 30% of men being attacked for their work. Understandably, male journalists were almost two times more likely to report dissatisfaction with their feeling of safety and security on the job than were female journalists.

Recommendations

Based on developments in the Cambodian media sector during 2015 and on data collected from its survey of professional journalists' attitudes and perceptions, CCIM makes the following recommendations aimed at increasing the independence and professionalism of Cambodian journalists and news outlets:

For the media:

- Publishers, owners and editors must hold themselves to the highest of ethical standards, as outlined in the Cambodian Journalists' Code of Ethics. Because they hold positions of influence and leadership, they must ensure the independence of their news outlets' content and the ethical behavior of their reporters and other news staff.
- Media organizations should commit to provide all support necessary to their reporters in case of an emergency related to their work. All media organizations should develop security policies detailing emergency procedures as well as the types of assistance they will provide to their staff, including but not limited to legal representation, medical treatment and temporary relocation to a safe house. All media organizations should, at minimum, provide their workers with NSSF, or accident compensation, as required by law, and should consider offering medical insurance.

- Increase coverage of violations of press freedom, Internet freedom and freedom of expression, as guaranteed by international frameworks and the Cambodian constitution.

For the government:

- Create a politically independent body responsible for issuance of media licenses. Ensure transparency in the licensing process so that public airwaves are open to a range of voices, opinions and independent news.
- Continue work on the draft Access to Information law using international best practices as a guide to ensure clear requirements and procedures for information disclosure.

For civil society:

- Prioritize capacity building of journalists as a means of increasing citizen access to information and freedom of expression. In particular, focus on areas identified by journalists as priorities, including political reporting and media law.
- Work with media outlets to promote the safety and protection of journalists by offering courses in physical and digital security.

