

Boeng Kak Activist Arrested on 'Intentional Violence' Charge

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A Boeng Kak community activist was arrested yesterday and immediately charged by the Phnom Penh Municipal Court with "intentional violence" for reasons the court refused to specify. Her husband was also arrested and later released without charge.

"Yorm Bopha was charged with intentional violence with aggravating circumstances, and she has been imprisoned," investigating Judge Te Sam Ang said. He refused to explain what Ms. Bopha was accused of doing or why she had been charged.

"The court decided that her husband [Luos Sakhorn] should be sent home because he was not involved in using violence," Judge Sam Ang added.

Ms. Bopha, 32, has been an outspoken resident of the Boeng Kak community, which has been fighting against evictions to make way for a real estate project owned by CPP Senator Lao Meng Khin.

Sung Sreyleap, another Boeng Kak activist, said she was traveling with the couple to pick up identi-

fication cards when several plainclothes police officers made the arrests at about 8:30 a.m.

"When they left their house, four plainclothes police officers followed them and when Ms. Bopha and her husband arrived at the offices in Srah Chak commune, the police arrested them without reason," Ms. Sreyleap said.

"I think the arrests of Yorm Bopha and her husband were organized by the government because Ms. Bopha was an active protester in the Boeng Kak issue."

Mr. Sakhorn, 56, said his wife had been wrongly accused and said he did not know why the couple had been detained.

"They came to detain me and my wife without giving a reason. I think the arrest of my wife was not because of any argument but because she is an active protester in the Boeng Kak issue," he said.

Am Sam Ath, technical adviser for rights group Licadho, said the NGO would investigate the incident.

Khlot Dara, chief of Prey Sar prison's correctional center II, confirmed that Ms. Bopha had been detained there, but declined to comment further.