

Joint Statement

Stop the Persecution of LRSU Unionists

Phnom Penh, July 3, 2026

We, the civil society organizations, associations, unions, and federations listed below, express our deep concern regarding the recent actions of the Phnom Penh Municipal Court, which has summoned members of the NagaWorld Labor Rights Supported Union (LRSU) for questioning in relation to "aggravated intentional destruction" allegedly committed at the NagaWorld casino premises, following their participation in a peaceful and non-violent strike.

For more than four years, the authorities and courts have still failed to deliver justice to LRSU union activists. The court must drop all charges against all LRSU union leaders and members and restore their full freedom. Relevant institutions should turn to resolving this long-standing labor dispute, rather than continuing to delay in the hope that workers will exhaust their means of protest, abandon their demands for justice, and continue to endure harassment and suffering.

From May to August 2022, every strike action by LRSU unionists was met with obstruction from security forces and authorities, including forcibly loading strikers—the majority of whom were women—onto buses and dropping them off on the outskirts of the city, and deploying barriers to prevent strikers from gathering in front of the NagaWorld company premises. Beyond this, groups of strikers were subjected to violence, beatings, and kicking, and in one case a female striker even suffered a miscarriage as a result.

On May 3, 2024, the Supreme Court upheld the decision of the Phnom Penh Capital Court, which had sentenced eight defendants—leaders and activists of the LRSU union—to imprisonment. Those individuals had been sentenced by the Phnom Penh Capital Court to between one and two years in prison. Ms. Chhim Sithar was the only defendant among them who was compelled to serve her full two-year sentence and only regained her freedom after completing her sentence in September 2024.

Beyond judicial abuse, LRSU union members and leaders have also suffered abuses of all kinds from security forces and Phnom Penh authorities, including physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. Authorities previously detained strikers and held them in certain locations under the pretext of enforcing laws on measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other dangerous and serious diseases, while these same measures were not applied to social gatherings with far larger numbers of people than the workers' protests, such as football matches. These actions demonstrate that the authorities attempted to

intimidate, threaten, abuse, and persecute workers who were striking peacefully, rather than helping to resolve the issues the union was facing and improve their working conditions.

We call on the court to unconditionally drop all charges and restore full freedom to all LRSU union leaders and members, so that they may live without fear of imprisonment or any form of persecution, and to turn toward finding a just resolution acceptable to all parties, as this is the only way to bring this labor dispute to a close. The authorities must respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of workers and employees, and stop treating the peaceful activities of unions as criminal offenses.

Civil society organizations, associations, unions, and federations endorsing this statement:

1. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
2. Cambodia Tourism Workers Union Federation (CTWUF)
3. Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO)
4. Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
5. Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)
6. Cambodia Food and Service Workers Federation (CFSWF)
7. Cambodia Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU)
8. Free and Independent Trade Union Federation (FUPI)
9. Building and Wood Workers Trade Union Confederation (BWTUC)
10. Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)
11. Rural Women's Association for Agriculture and Environment (RWAA)
12. Cambodian Youth Network Association (CYN)
13. Partnership for Environment and Development (PED)
14. The Cambodian NGO Committee on CEDAW (NGO-CEDAW)
15. Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL)
16. Mother Nature (MN)
17. Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC)
18. Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)
19. Tourism Workers Union of SOFITEL Phnom Penh Phokeethra Hotel (TWUSPH)
20. Tourism Employees Union of Les Jardins Du Bassac Apartment (TEUJB)
21. Tourism Workers Union of Baitong Hotel & Resort Phnom Penh (TWUBHRP)
22. Tourism Workers Union of Sunway Hotel Phnom Penh (TWUSP)
23. Tourism Workers Union of Cambodiana Hotel (TWUCH)
24. HCC Group Company Employee Union (HCCGCEU)
25. Tourism Workers Union of Raffles Le Royal Hotel (TWURRH)