

Annex 1: Timeline of Events

9-10 September 2014

On 9 Sept. 2014, Cambodian authorities detained two of Equitable Cambodia's ("EC") employees without just cause. Ms. Meg Fukuzawa, a research consultant, and Mr. Lida Sok, a Cambodian research officer, had been conducting surveys in Bos village when they were confronted by local authorities and transported to the provincial police station.

They were interrogated about their research activities for over three hours, after which Mr. Sok was released from police custody. Ms. Fukuzawa remained in detention overnight and was involuntarily transported by armed escort to the Department of Immigration in Phnom Penh the following morning. After an interview was conducted with the Director of the Department of Immigration, Ms. Fukuzawa was released from police custody at 3:30 p.m. without charge.

Police cited concerns about the researchers' safety, as well as the unavailability of Ms. Fukuzawa's original passport as grounds for their removal from Bos village and subsequent detention and involuntary transport to Phnom Penh (*see: [joint statement re. illegal detention of EC staff](#)*).

Wednesday, 8 October 2014

On the morning of 8 October 2014, the EC research team was conducting interviews with approximately 20 evictees at Bak Nim village when provincial authorities, including Long Sokun, the Deputy Police Chief of Oddar Meanchey, arrived and ordered them to leave immediately. According to the police, since EC staff did not inform the local authorities of their activities in advance of the field visit, they would have to seek permission from the Provincial Governor to continue the interviews.

The Deputy Provincial Police Chief also erroneously invoked the Law on Counter-Terrorism¹ as a legal ground to impede the meeting, which was held at a private residence in Bak Nim village. When interviewed by *The Cambodia Daily*, the Provincial Police Chief, Men Maly, "conceded that there was no law requiring permission for a meeting inside a private residence, but insisted that the NGO needed it anyway."²

Mr. Chan Vichet, a Community Liaison Officer, explained that EC has been registered with the Ministry of Interior as a local NGO since 2012. As such, EC is authorized to conduct legal activities throughout Cambodia. This line of reasoning was rejected, even after copies of the relevant documents were provided to the provincial authorities.

¹ *Law on Counter Terrorism*, 2007, online: UNODC <<https://www.unodc.org/tldb/showDocument.do?documentUId=8487&node=docs&cmd=add&country=CMB>>.

² Aun Pheap and Peter Zsombor, "Oddar Meanchey Police Break Up Meeting Between NGO, Evictees", *The Cambodia Daily* (10 October 2014), online: <<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/oddar-meachey-police-break-up-meeting-between-ngo-etictees-69542/>>.

At 2:00 p.m., Mr. Sok, Mr. Net, and Mr. Chan met with the Samrong Town Governor, who indicated that he broke up the gathering because he was not familiar with EC and its activities. EC staff answered extensive questions put to them by the Town Governor about the organization, including the names of its NGO partners, sources of funding, and detailed activities. Upon request, the team also provided a copy of the interview questionnaire.

The Town Governor informed the group that he would meet with the Provincial Governor the following day to discuss granting permission to the team to continue their research. He commented that EC should act like other NGOs and provide Samrong district authorities with an “informing letter” to conduct work in the area, along with trip schedules, at least a week in advance.

Thursday, 9 October 2014

At 12:00 p.m. the Deputy Town Governor called Mr. Sok to inform him that because EC does not have an office in Oddar Meanchey, the team must submit a “request letter” to the provincial office. If approval were granted at the provincial level, the village and district authorities would be notified accordingly.

At 2:00 p.m., a staff member from the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (“ADHOC”), a partner NGO, contacted the Provincial Governor directly by telephone and was also informed that EC must submit a “request letter” to his office.

Friday, 10 October 2014

At 8:30 a.m., EC staff attended the Provincial Governor’s office to submit a “notification letter,” containing information about EC’s mission in Oddar Meanchey.

Shortly after 11:30 a.m., affected persons from Bak Nim and Bos villages arrived at ADHOC’s provincial office in Samrong to continue providing information for the NHRCT investigation. They informed the NGO partners that the police, who had been stationed at the sugar plantation since EC started their fieldwork, warned them not to leave Bak Nim village. Moreover, in an attempt to dissuade evictees from participating in interviews in town, the Village Chief of Bak Nim had intentionally misled community members by informing them that EC staff had been arrested by provincial authorities.

At approximately 4:30 p.m., 20 minutes after leaving the ADHOC office, a community representative called Mr. Sok to inform him that the authorities, including the Deputy Police Chief and Deputy Town Governor, had placed the group of 16 villagers in roadside detention. The authorities questioned the villagers about their activities, including who had invited them to the ADHOC office and why a meeting was held there. After the interrogation, the vehicle was permitted to continue back to the villages.

Saturday, 11 October 2014

Between 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., EC staff conducted 16 interviews with affected persons from Bos village and several other villages, who had been transported by EC and

ADHOC staff to the latter's office earlier in the morning. During this time, provincial authorities had erected a roadblock on the road between Samrong and Bos village.

After completing the interviews, Mr. Chan and an ADHOC staff member left Samrong in the official EC vehicle to escort the 17 villagers back to Bos village. Approximately seven kilometers from the ADHOC office, the group was met with road barriers and several police vehicles. Reporters from the television network TV3 were also on the scene.

At the roadblock, the Provincial Traffic Police Chief, Nhol Vuth, asked Mr. Chan for his driver's license and registration documents for the vehicle. Mr. Chan provided his license as directed, but the vehicle's original registration documents were being kept at EC's main office in Phnom Penh. When the Police Chief was questioned as to why they had stopped EC's vehicle, another police officer asserted that "there are many NGO cars that carry wood from illegal logging."

After detaining EC's vehicle, the police made no attempts to prevent other vehicles from driving through the barrier. After Mr. Chan noted that the police had only stopped the EC car, they began to perform cursory stops of other vehicles, during which they requested drivers to show their licences, but not their vehicle registration.

When Mr. Nhol Vuth noticed that Mr. Chan had been recording the traffic stops of other vehicles, he approached and attempted to seize the camera. When Mr. Chan refused to surrender the camera, the Provincial Traffic Police Chief physically assaulted Mr. Chan, punching him in the stomach. As the Police Chief initiated the physical violence, and therefore did not act in self-defence, his behaviour constitutes assault and serves as a blatant example of police brutality.

Subsequently, the police escorted Mr. Chan in the EC vehicle to the provincial police station, where they waited until EC was able to provide copies of the vehicle registration documents. The police claimed that their conduct, including the roadblock, roadside detention, and demand for original documents were all authorized under the Traffic Law.

Nearly three hours after receiving the registration documentation, the police directed Mr. Chan to provide his thumbprint on two traffic incident reports. The police then requested a verbal agreement that all of the photos on EC's camera would be erased. Fearing further escalation, Mr. Chan agreed to the proposed arrangement and was permitted to return to the ADHOC office with the EC vehicle around 7:00 p.m. When contacted by media about the incident, Mr. Nhol Vuth claimed that he had merely been enforcing traffic laws. He further asserted that Mr. Chan had no right to take photos of him and his officers at work, but denied striking him.³

A villager who had been evicted from O'Bat Moan village later discovered that the Village Chief had informed others that she had been arrested in Samrong, which again was fabricated to instil fear in the villagers and deter them from collaborating with EC.

³ Mech Dara and Peter Zsombor, "Rights Group Claims Continued Harassment in Oddar Meanchey", *The Cambodia Daily* (13 October 2014), online: < <http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/rights-group-claims-continued-harassment-in-oddar-meanchey-69650/>>.