

Case Study Report Lor Peang Community Land Conflict



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Cover Photo: Lor Peang community members march to seek justice for the illegal occupation of their lands

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ACRONYMS

ART	Action Research Team
CDC	Council for the Development of Cambodia
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
CNRP	Cambodian National Rescue Party
ELCs	Economic Land Concession
EU	European Union
FGS	Focus on the Global South
SOC	Government of the State of Cambodia
Ha	Hectare
KDC	KDC International
MLMUPC	Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction
MoAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MoE	Ministry of Environment
OHCHR	Office for the High Commission for Human Rights
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SLCs	Social Land Concessions
UN	United Nations

KAMPONG CHHNANG PROVINCE IN CAMBODIA



INTRODUCTION

STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE OF THE CASE STUDY REPORT

This case study report has been written to present and reflect on the Lor Peang land conflict with KDC International, from the perspective of the Lor Peang community activists. It utilizes data largely collected by the community and their supporters over the last 16 years and focuses on the events of the conflict and the resistance actions taken by the community. The purposes for a case study report at this time, are as follows;

1. The dispute, community, and activists are well known within Cambodia and aspects of the events and impacts of this dispute have been told by a range of media and NGOs over the last decade. The Lor Peang activists felt that it was time for them to present some of their perspectives and experiences of the land conflict events over the last sixteen years.
2. They felt it was time to document their experiences for their children and community, while also adding their voices and perspectives to those of other communities also resisting dispossession of their land and natural resources.
3. It is anticipated that this case study will provide an opportunity for reflection by the community on their experiences and contribute to their knowledge base as they continue with their fight for a just solution.

There is an ever-growing body of research on land conflicts in Cambodia which the background section of this report closely references in order to provide a brief summary of the broader political, economic, and social-cultural contexts and identified root causes within which the Lor Peang land conflict has occurred. The methodology used is then detailed. This is followed by the case study presentation which tells the story of the Lor Peang communities struggle, resisting their dispossession from their land over the last 16 years. The final section presents the impacts of this land conflict as identified by the Lor Peang community and analysis of the case study presentation to reflect on these experiences and to identify ongoing challenges, progress made, and some further reflections on this still active land conflict.

BACKGROUND

CAMBODIAN LAND ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT SINCE THE KHMER ROUGE

Land is the foundation for social organization in rural Cambodia, and the repository of memory that holds onto traces of the past in the absence of a strong written tradition.¹ Generally, a family has a plot of land for housing and one or several small parcels of land used mainly for rice farming assets² which represent both livelihood and inheritance for future generations, establishing a families' belonging and stability in the social order, and is integral to their identity as farmers. As of 2013, 78.6% of Cambodia's population lived in rural areas,³ largely relying on subsistence agriculture, fishing and non-timber forest resources for both food security and income.⁴ As Shalmali Guttal (2007) writes, in light of Cambodia's recent history a "family's attachment to its piece of land has particular significance in a society that over the past hundred years has hurtled through successive periods of civil conflict, war, massive displacement, forced collectivization and genocide, and finally into an unregulated, capitalist, market economy."⁵

During the Khmer Rouge period, 1975-1979, all formal land administrative systems, and documentation and maps, were destroyed with many land administrative officials killed⁶. Between 1979 and 1989, land was considered state property with land ownership largely tied, as it

had been historically, to land use based on the household occupation.⁷ This was built on understandings between neighbors and villagers, and was believed to be sufficient to demarcate boundaries.⁸ In most communities, land distribution was not formally recorded.⁹

In 1989, the Government of the State of Cambodia (SOC)¹⁰ started to allocate agricultural land to rural communities and "established ownership rights for residential land up to 2000 square meters and possession rights for cultivated land of less than five hectares in rural areas"¹¹. "The 1992 Land Law allowed people to apply for land certificates that confirmed occupancy and use rights, although the law allowed only possession rights rather than ownership in rural areas."¹² The Land Law of 2002 was passed "largely in recognition of the fact that progress towards economic and social development required a system of strengthened land tenure rights, as well as improved land management and administration. The law recognizes three domains of land ownership in Cambodia: state public property (e.g. forests, protected areas) for resource conservation, state private property for economic and social development, and private property (e.g. residential or agricultural land)."¹³

The evolution of the land administration mechanisms included the development of the land titling process, albeit at a slow pace in the 1990s and early 2000s.¹⁴ While these

¹ Shalmali Guttal, 2007. Alienation of Land and Resources in Cambodia in Land Struggles: LRAN Briefing Paper 1, October 2007.

² United Nations Cambodia Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2004. Land concessions for economic purposes in Cambodia, A human rights perspective. November 2004

³ Royal Government of Cambodia, 2013. National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Phnom Penh, Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013, November 2013

⁴ Asian Development Bank, 2014. Cambodia: Country poverty analysis 2014. Also of note is that 90% of families experiencing income poverty living in rural areas, Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Cambodia Center for Human Rights (CCHR), 2013. Cambodia: A land in conflict – An overview of the Land Situation

⁷ Ibid. Although some communities established communal farming arrangements.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Brett M. Ballard, 2006. Land tenure database development in Cambodia, Cambodia Development Resource Institute, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

¹⁰ The Cambodian government was called the Government of the State of Cambodia (SOC) between 1989 – 1993. In 1993 it became the Royal Government of Cambodia.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Guttal.S., 2007.

formal processes have become known across rural Cambodia, the customary law of possession where ownership of land is transferred through inheritance from one generation to another is still perceived to exist.¹⁵ While evidence of land use prior to 2001 is recognized in the 2001 land law,¹⁶ these dual understandings on land ownership are an additional hurdle communities face. “Concerns among civil society remain that certain areas are still being excluded from the land registration process, in particular those communities located in areas where land values are high or where land has been marked for development.”¹⁷ Further to this, research indicates that vulnerable rural community members who attempt to access land titles have to negotiate a largely inaccessible system due to administrative and financial barriers when seeking to provide land use rights¹⁸—including the payment of fees and multilayered applications to register their land title¹⁹. When communities are unable to access land titles, they are left in a “position of great insecurity, defenseless when authorities and companies claim their land.”²⁰

LAND CONCESSIONS, CONFLICT AND DISPUTE MECHANISMS

With Cambodia’s entry into a free market global economy in the 1990s, “the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) introduced a number of private investment incentives through an economic reform agenda to promote economic and social development.”²¹ This development in the form of privatization, large-scale infrastructural development, tourism, foreign investment and agro-industry placed a lot of pressure on the availability of land for the poor.²² Private investment incentives in the form of

land concessions facilitated this development and included both Economic Land Concessions (ELCs) and Special Economic Zones (SEZ). ELCs are designed to grant state private land to private domestic and foreign companies for the contractual leasing of up to 10,000 hectares (ha) of land for industrial agricultural purposes (e.g. food or industrial crops including tree plantations, aquaculture, plants to process agricultural raw materials), for up to 99 years.²³ They are designed to develop the land in an appropriate and perpetual manner, to increase employment and diversify livelihood opportunities within a framework of natural resource management and to generate state, provincial, and commune revenues.²⁴

Special Economic Zones (SEZ) are governed by the 1994 Law on Investment²⁵ and were established by sub-decree #147 in 2005 (see Annex 2).²⁶ They are a strategy through which the government using conducive legal, logistical, and tax arrangements attract export-orientated manufacturing investment (mainly foreign).²⁷ The government’s stated purpose in establishing these zones was to “promote diversification of the industrial base beyond electronics, to establish economic linkages between urban and rural areas and to promote industrial investment outside of Phnom Penh.”²⁸ To be established an operator requires at least 50 ha of land and presence of infrastructure – roads, electricity, and water supply to service activities.²⁹ A special board was created within the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) called the Cambodian Special Economic Zone Board (CESZB) to manage the SEZ scheme (See Annex 2 for details on the decree

¹⁵ Dr. Hean Sokhom, 2015. Study on Land Disputes in Four Provinces of Cambodia: Mapping, Impacts, and Possible Solutions, The NGO Forum of Cambodia, Land security project, November 2015

¹⁶ Land Law 2001, Article 30 states that any person who, for no less than five years prior to the promulgation of this law, enjoyed peaceful, uncontested possession of immovable property that can be lawfully be privately possess, has the right to request a definitive title of ownership

¹⁷ CCHR, 2013. and see Focus on the Global South, 2013. Moving Forward: Study on the impacts of the Implementation of Order 01BB in selected Communities in Rural Cambodia, June 2013

¹⁸ Surya P. Subedi, 2012. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, Addendum A human rights analysis of economic and other land concessions in Cambodia, 10 October 2012

¹⁹ CCHR, 2013

²⁰ CCHR, 2013

²¹ Guttal, S. 2007.

²² Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), 2012. Cases on Large Scale Land Acquisition in Asia, International Land Coalition (ILC) for the Asian Farmers’ Association (AFA), Writer-Editor: Ma Josefa Petilla, October 2012

²³ The sub-decree on economic land concessions set the criteria for the granting of concessions to parties. Among the criteria include environment impact assessment, public consultations with territorial authorities and local residents, and resettlement of affected villagers. The sub-decree on state land management guarantees the granting of definitive land titles to individuals who have occupied or possessed a non-state public land uncontested for at least five years prior to the promulgation of the land law. (AFA, 2012)

²⁴ http://www.cambodiainvestment.gov.kh/sub-decree-146-on-economic-land-concessions_051227.html

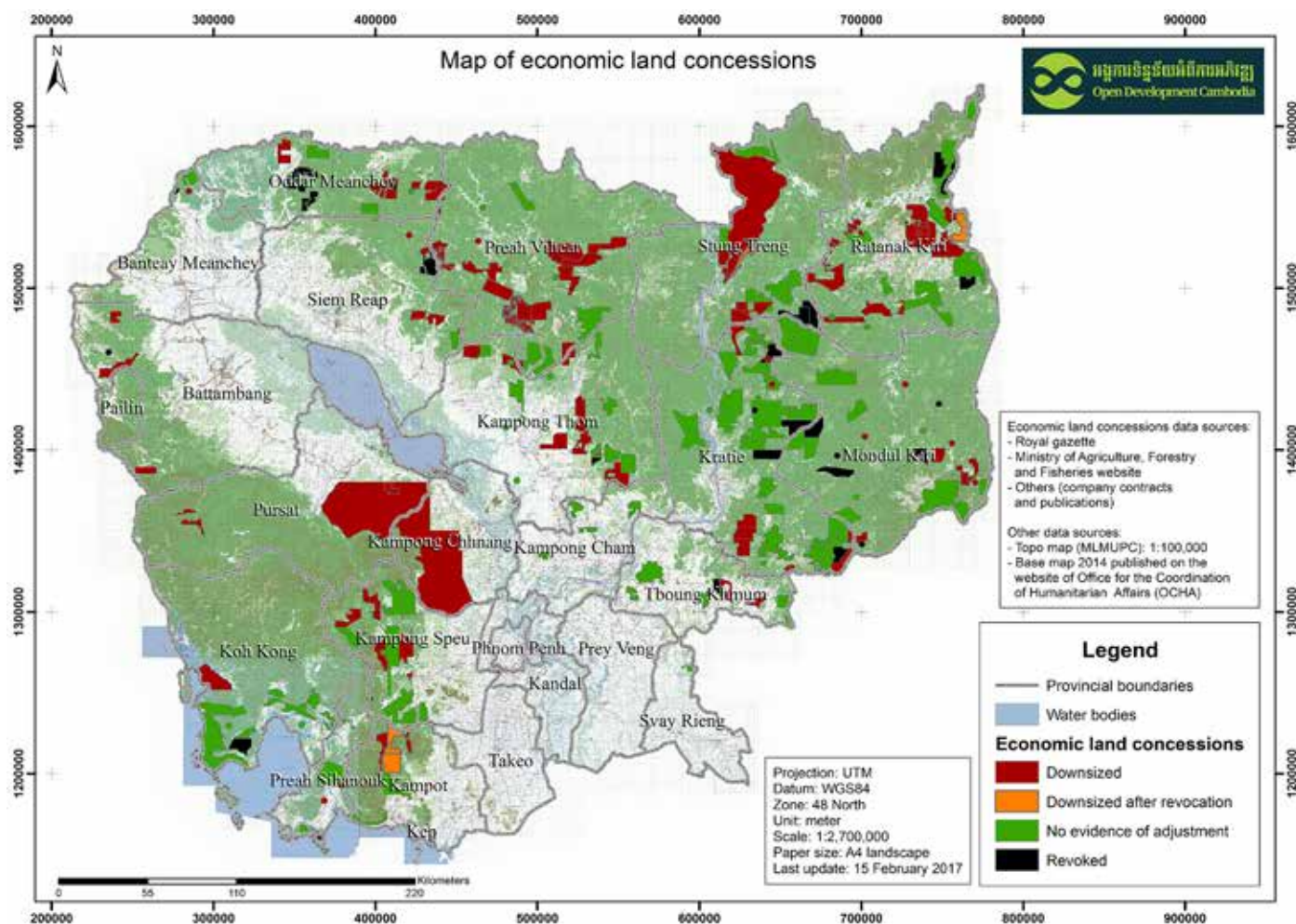
²⁵ <https://opendevelopmentcambodia.net/topics/special-economic-zones/>

²⁶ Warr, P. and Menon., 2015. ADB Economics Working Paper Series: Cambodia’s Special Economic Zones No. 459 October 2015

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid sourced from World Bank 2012

²⁹ Ibid



requirements of a SEZ).³⁰ While Cambodia has several legal instruments that safeguard and protect the interest of the local population in terms of land acquisition and ownership,³¹ land has become an increasingly valuable commodity with an informal land market emerging as free market opportunities developed in land speculation, logging, commercial agriculture such as rubber and cas-

sava,³² and other natural resources.³³

Five formal land conflict resolution mechanisms exist in Cambodia today: commune councils, Cadastral Commissions, administrative commissions, the National Authority for Land Dispute Resolution, and the courts. The mandate of the commune council is to reconcile

³⁰ From <https://opendevdevelopmentcambodia.net/topics/special-economic-zones/> - An SEZ is a Qualified Investment Project (QIP), which is a project that has been certified by the CDC and benefits from government-provided financial incentives. 7 SEZ developers and investors receive preferential incentives including profit tax exemption for nine years, import duty exemption for equipment to construct the zone, value added tax exemption, unrestricted foreign exchange, and guarantees against nationalization and price fixing. While QIPs within SEZs receive the same financial incentives as QIPs outside of SEZs, SEZs benefit from a “one-stop service” mechanism that streamlines import-export processes.

³¹ Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development, 2012. These instruments include provisions in the 1993 RGC Constitution, Land Law of 2001, sub-decree on economic land concession and sub-decree on land management. The Royal Government of Cambodia is also party to key international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. These treaties, together with the Universal

Declaration on Human Rights, guarantee the rights to own property and not be arbitrarily deprived of property; to an adequate standard of living, including food and housing; to self-determination and not to be deprived of one’s means of subsistence; to freedoms of expression and assembly; to equality before the law and equal protection of the law; and to an effective remedy.

The Rectangular Strategy Phase 3 of the Royal Government of Cambodia emphasizes the commitment of the government to continue the land reform program aimed at strengthening the system of land management, distribution and utilization of land, ensuring the security of the titles of land ownership, eliminating illegal and anarchic land grabbing, and preventing misuse of land acquisition and landholding of concessions for speculative purposes or without any productive purpose. The strategy also provides the action for achieving the above mentioned objectives.

³² Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) 2012. Foreign Investment in Agriculture in Cambodia CDRI Working Paper Series No. 60, Saing Chan Hang, Hem Sochet and Ouch Chandarany with Phann Dalis and Pon Dorina.

³³ AFA, 2012.

differences of opinion among citizens in the commune, but they have no decision-making authority,³⁴ while the Cadastral Commission has a mission to solve disputes related to unregistered property at the district, provincial and national levels. Land title disputes are formally mandated to be settled by the courts. Three levels of jurisdiction exist, Courts of First Instance, Appeals Court, and the Supreme Court.³⁵

In-line with more traditional dispute settlement practices however, communities affected by land conflicts utilize the submission of complaints and petitions to a much larger number of authorities who, while they do not have the jurisdiction to resolve land disputes, may be able to favorably influence it.³⁶

“The root causes of land conflicts have been well-documented: a corrupt and politically-obedient judicial system, the misuse of armed forces, including soldiers, as well as collusion between well-connected companies and authorities. This toxic cocktail has been fueling conflicts throughout the country for too long.”

(LICADHO Technical Coordinator)³⁷

According to a range of NGO data, land disputes as of 2014 affected between half a million³⁸ and 700,000 people,³⁹ in a country of 15.5 million. One of the most common ways people lose land is through having their

land seized by powerful and wealthy individuals and private companies.⁴⁰ The lack of legal titles for many rural families in the 1990s and early 2000s left them vulnerable to the dispossession of their land. Private companies and people with political and financial connections were able to purchase fake certificates of land titles, often working with a person of authority in a broker’s role such as a village or commune chief or commune councilors, and supported by the local police and courts.⁴¹

The granting of land concessions further solidified the large-scale seizure of land. For example, a lack of oversight and transparency of the granting, management and monitoring of ELCs by responsible authorities—a clear breach of the regulations—led to a lack of publicly accessible data, transparency and unclear boundaries between concession and village lands.⁴² The national determination of ELCs also contradicted preliminary decisions made at the village and commune levels approving land use at the disputed location in line with customary practice, however national decisions held greater power and required local authorities to follow their directives.⁴³

Land concession mechanisms were created to facilitate opportunities to develop Cambodia for Cambodians, with ‘the RGC claiming (for example) that ELCs are vital to the economic growth of the country, and bring numerous social and economic benefits, despite the lack of published data.’⁴⁴ However, as noted by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Cambodia, “no comprehensive evidence-based report has been officially published about the benefits of land concessions.”⁴⁵ Instead reports on the impact of land concessions have demonstrated a model which benefits only the powerful elite as the government seeks to increase exports, and exploit its land and natural resources for quick unsustainable financial gain.⁴⁶

³⁴ Dr Hean Sokhom, 2015. sourced from Art. 6, No 47 ANK.BK/ May 31, 2002, Sub Decree on Organization and Functioning of the Cadastral Commission, and OHCHR 2012

³⁵ Dr. Hean Sokhom, 2015.

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Cambodia League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO) Feb 19, 2015 Media Statement, Renewed surge in land disputes must be addressed not denied

³⁸ Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO), April 1, 2014, Statement, 2014 Brings a New Wave of Cambodian Land Conflicts

³⁹ CCHR 2013

⁴⁰ Guttal.S., 2007.

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Cambodia League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO) May 2009 “Land Grabbing and Poverty in Cambodia: The Myth of Development”, and see Pei Sokha, Pierre-Yves Le Meur, Sam Vitou, Laing Lan, Pei Setha, Hay Leakhen & Im Sothy, May 2008, Land Transactions in Rural Cambodia : A synthesis of Findings from Research on Appropriation and Derived Rights to Land, Coll. Études et Travaux, série en ligne n°18, Éditions du Gret,

⁴³ Dr Hean Sokhom, 2015

⁴⁴ CCHR 2013

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ LICADHO 2009, CCHR 2013, and see Guttal.S., 2007, see Dr. Hean Sokhom, November 2015

Research indicates that when communities seek to dispute the loss of their land they are stymied by a dispute resolution system with multiple actors⁴⁷ with differing responsibilities as dictated by regulation and shaped by corruption and patronage, enabling little resolution in complex cases.⁴⁸ Local authorities are tasked with resolving complaints at a local level but do not have the authority to resolve land disputes, and are inclined to push their responsibilities to those above them, unwilling to disturb systems of patronage which keep them in office.⁴⁹ Moreover, as a study commissioned by the World Bank Centre for Advance Study and German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ) found, Cadastral Commissions struggle to resolve complex cases, particularly those involving multiple parties and parties with connections to the government or the military.⁵⁰ Another World Bank study further found that people involved in land disputes avoid filing complaints because “formal institutions of justice such as the Cadastral Commissions or the courts were perceived as costly, time consuming and biased toward the rich.”⁵¹

As highlighted in various NGO reports, the Cambodian courts continue to use their power to support the interests of the rich and powerful, subverting quite progressive laws⁵² to control land and other natural resources, and to intimidate, arrest, and imprison activists.⁵³ The Cambodian Center for Human Rights concluded that “this is a clear violation of Cambodia’s constitution... and in the absence of accessible, efficient and independent mechanisms for land dispute resolution, the poorest and most vulnerable communities will remain at risk of having their lands appropriated and being displaced with impunity.”⁵⁴ Across Cambodia, NGOs have documented the abuse of villagers at the hands of the court system, and other abuses including: the use of security forces to guard disputed land, threaten and intimidate community members resisting the land grab; the offer of poor compensation which is then not paid; the destruction of property and razing of land; the threat of arrest and

holding of activists in detention; and then imprisonment on dubious charges.⁵⁵

IMPACT OF LAND CONFLICTS ON COMMUNITIES

Research reports by NGOs, research bodies, and the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) over the last decade have highlighted the impact of land conflicts on the communities they afflict.⁵⁶ As stated above, reports focusing on land concessions and land conflicts identify a lack of evidence⁵⁷ to support the idea that investment incentive mechanisms like ELCs have provided any benefits to the development and well-being of either the local communities within and around these concession areas, or to Cambodia in the form of diversified employment, increased local, provincial and national revenues, and services, or increased economic growth in the local and regional communities.⁵⁸ Reports have instead highlighted a range of consistent and negative impacts.⁵⁹ These include the violent eviction of communities from their land, and the control and refusal to grant access to agricultural and forest land and water sources.

In Cambodia, households which are landless or unable to purchase land is a reliable indicator of poverty,⁶⁰ while one of the most important indicators for food security in rural areas is the amount and quality of land to which households have access and control over.⁶¹ Additional impacts include: daily insecurity with the presence of military and private security forces around land and in their communities; the loss of their livelihoods and food security leading to greater vulnerability, poverty and debt; and the resulting impact on the health, wellbeing and access to services, such as payment of school fees for children when it is difficult to put food on the table. Migration and the subsequent break-up of households with men and women seeking work in urban centers in Cambodia or regional countries is widely reported in

⁴⁷ See previous section on land administration

⁴⁸ Guttal.S., 2007, and Dr Hean Sokhom, 2015.

⁴⁹ Dr Hean Sokhem, 2015.

⁵⁰ Ibid and see Pel Sokha, Pierre-Yves Le Meur, Sam Vitou, Laing Lan, Pel Setha, Hay Leakhen & Im Sothy, 2008.

⁵¹ Dr Hean Sokhom, 2015. sourced from World Bank/CAS. (2006a). Justice for the Poor? An Exploratory Study of Collective Grievances over Land and Local Governance in Cambodia.

⁵² Including Cambodia’s Constitution which guarantees that “Khmer citizens are equal before the law, enjoying the same rights, liberties and duties regardless of race, color, sex, language, beliefs, religions, political tendencies, birth origin, social status, wealth or other situations. (ADHOC, Feb 2013 ‘A Turning Point? Land, Housing and Natural Resources Rights in Cambodia in 2012)

⁵³ LICADHO, 2009., Guttal.S. 2007., CCHR, 2013.

⁵⁴ Dr Hean Sokhom, 2015.

⁵⁵ Licadho, 2009. See also Guttal.S., 2007., OHCHR, 2015.

⁵⁶ Licadho, 2009, Guttal.S., 2007, OHCHR, 2012, CCHR, 2013.

⁵⁷ FAO, 2012.

⁵⁸ OHCHR, 2012.

⁵⁹ For some further information see Licadho, 2009., Guttal.S., 2007., Sokhom, 2015.

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ Ballard. B.M., 2006. Land tenure database development in Cambodia. , Acting Research Director, Cambodia Development Resource Institute, 2006/1. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

communities affected by land disputes as desperation pushes family members to find alternate income sources, often at the risk of exploitation.⁶² Case studies also draw attention to the impact on a person's identity, a loss of place in their family and community, and their future plans, when their land is taken away from them.⁶³

The environmental well-being of the land is also impacted with the logging of forests destroying habitats and biodiversity for native flora and fauna, while monocrops and commercial agriculture can reduce soil fertility through the heavy use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, and damage an eco-system for which it is not well suited.⁶⁴

All of these impacts are compounded by a lack of effective and fair solutions for the affected communities.⁶⁵

RESISTANCE

In the face of an ineffectual, corrupt, and at times threatening dispute resolution process, and a governance and judicial system unwilling to provide protections or safeguards to communities involved in land disputes, research and media reports show that these communities are utilizing a range of strategies and actions to resist the seizing of their land.⁶⁶ Communities involved in land disputes have organized themselves to resist in a myriad of ways using the resources available to them. These include:

- The submission of petitions and formal complaints to local and national authorities; district and ministry officials; the courts and cadastral commissions; embassies and international donors,⁶⁷ appealing also to parliamentarians and key figures with power in government to gain some leverage, and hopefully be taken up by an official with power to find an effective remedy to the conflict.⁶⁸
- Non-violent actions to generate public awareness including road blocks, marches, sit-ins outside key

official offices, and blocking company workers and heavy machinery.

- Daily resistance including accessing disputed land, community organizing, and non-compliance with local authorities.
- Media outreach through press conferences called at local and national levels to publicize demands and experiences, speaking on radio talk shows, giving interviews to print media, and encouraging their presence at protests.
- Working with NGOs, in particular legal human rights groups who can assist communities to negotiate the legal judicial system, assist with investigating disputes, and advocate with communities about the social and environmental injustices and proposed remedies.
- Developing partnerships and solidarity with communities across Cambodia and the region, advocating and organizing against the destruction and loss of natural resources, and more broadly social justice issues.

A number of reports show that there have been a small number of successes in some situations,⁶⁹ usually where communities have used a collective approach and appealed to powerful administrative officials, often a district or provincial governor to intervene on their behalf,⁷⁰ or where a company has initiated local level dispute and complaints procedures.⁷¹ For example, the moratorium on ELCs in 2012 was triggered by the international and internal pressure to address the dire impact and flouting of regulations by foreign and Cambodian investment companies, and has led to the revocation of some ELCs.

While “the egg cannot crack the stone”⁷² at this time, the activism of communities, NGOs and other supporters continues to keep the scale of these land conflicts and abuse of communities alive and active as a political, eco-

⁶² See AFA, 2012., OHCHR, 2012., Lor Peang case study presentation

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Guttal, S. 2007.

⁶⁵ AFA, 2012.

⁶⁶ Dr. Hean Sokhom, 2015.

⁶⁷ Of note: while donors and foreign governments are appealed to— in particular those working in the human rights space— assessments by human rights organisations point to their lack of leverage and influence over the RGC to generate substantive change, Guttal, 2007., Licadho 2009

⁶⁸ Justice for the Poor, 2008. Volume 2, Issue 2, Legal Pluralism and Equity: Some Reflections on Land Reform in Cambodia, written by Daniel Adler, Doug Porter and Michael Woolcock, April 2008.

⁶⁹ According to a report from September 2013 by GIZ Cambodia, the Cadastral Commission had processed nearly 5,000 cases and solved more than 2,500. Of these, almost 400 cases involved parties embroiled in a conflict, often involving a group of villagers against a powerful person. With land conflicts on the rise and a reported case resolution of around 50 percent, the Cadastral Commission's record demonstrates room for improvement (GIZ, 2013) sourced from Dr Heam Sokhem, 2015.

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ OHCHR, 2012.

⁷² Cited from case study Touch and Need, 2015 - Old Cambodian proverb used by villagers fatalistically about the presence of ELCs

conomic and social justice issue in Cambodia. Research, reports and community activism on these issues clearly identifies however that communities resisting dispossession from their land face a “powerful coalition of government authorities, private investment companies and

the military”⁷³ unwilling to take-up their concerns,⁷⁴ which is further bolstered by the home governments of international investors and their home government willing to disregard the abuse and dispossession of rural Cambodians.⁷⁵

METHODOLOGY

This case study report was developed primarily through an iterative qualitative process of discussion with Focus on the Global South’s (FGS) Cambodian representatives, and review and analysis of data collected since 2007 when FGS started to support Action Research Teams (ARTs) in Cambodia. Action Research Teams are community activists who wish to take on research and an organizing role in their communities. The role of the FGS representative is that of a facilitator, supporter and at times educator as requested by the ART members, who are recognized as the experts of their situation, and the leaders of their dispute and resistance.

This data was collected through regular documentation of events, observation and meetings with ARTs and the communities over the years. Information was collated, summarized and translated into English by the FGS staff representative for the drafting consultant. The consultant reviewed the data and identified gaps in discussion with the FGS representatives. The consultant further reviewed publicly available external research and media reports about the land conflict, and more broadly about land issues in Cambodia to provide an introduction to the broader framework within which this case study sits. Analysis was produced through iterative discussion with FGS representatives with clarifying questions then further explored with key community representatives. The analysis also incorporated broader analysis from a national ART reflection meeting in 2013 as well as external land conflict reports.

It is important to note that this case study report primarily uses data collected by the Action Research Teams between 2007 and 2017 and presents the experiences—issues, concerns, actions, events, motivations—

of both the ART members and community members involved in the land dispute at the time the data was collected. While the experiences and events described are not representative of all community members affected by this land conflict, this case study report does seek to provide a summary description and analysis of the Lor Peang land conflict from the perspective of participating community members highlighting events they have identified as of significance over the last 10 years. Data from 1996 – 2006 is sourced from a mix of external reports and community notes.⁷⁶

A limitation to this data is that it was not purposively collected for use in a case study at some future date. The ART members focused their data collection efforts to explore and understand what people wanted to know about their situation at that particular moment, conducting research identified as needed with the community to support their actions and concerns at that time. ART membership was fluid as people moved in and out of being active in the land conflict depending on their personal situation and the local security conditions for organizing and activism. These conditions have shaped the type of data available for this case study report which focusses on events and actions with strategies, impacts, reflections and the process of organizing in the community pulled where visible from this data. Of note when considering this is the open and trusting relationship the FGS representative has with the ART members.

Due to ongoing sensitivities around this land conflict, this case study report has sought to not use the names of people, except where their names have been publicly released.

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ OHCHR, 2007.

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Community notes refer to a range of data – meeting notes from ART meetings/workshops, documents such as petitions and letters kept by the ARTs, notes documenting the observation of events by FGS representatives and ART, discussion with FGS representatives, discussions with ART and community members).

CASE STUDY PRESENTATION

THE LOR PEANG LAND CONFLICT

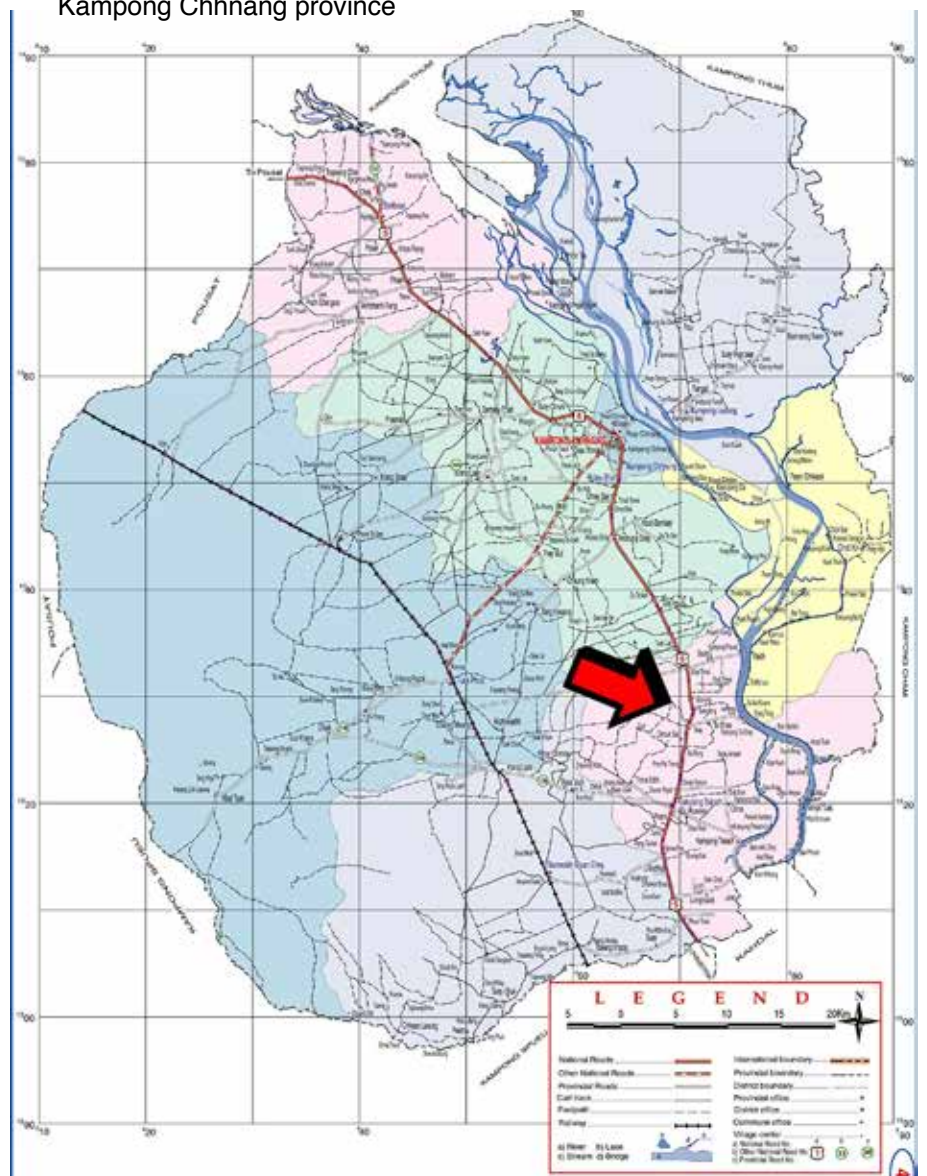
“Traditionally land has been viewed as the memory of the villagers —it is their story of their past and what they hope to give to their families/children for the future. It is a gift to their children which means they will not be servants to others...their memories of their past is lost if the land is lost. No amount of financial compensation will compensate for the loss of their memories and futures”

(FGS Representative, 9 Feb)

The affected Lor Peang communities are located in the four villages of Lor Peang, Beoung Kok, Samrong and Ta Ches in Ta Ches Commune, Kampong Tralach District, Kampong Chhnang Province, approximately 60km from Phnom Penh close to National Highway 5. As of the 2008 census Ta Ches commune had a population of 11,486 and covered an area of 53.31 square kilometers.⁷⁷

Between 1982 and 1996 the villagers of Ta Ches commune farmed rice and small plantations of fruit and cash crops as their primary source of livelihood for their households. They also owned small and large animals that grazed in small areas of natural habitat, and used the manure to fertilize the soil. Land had been allocated to families by the local village and commune authority, an average of 3 Ha per family, based on the size of a household. While a few community members had land titles, most villagers based their ownership on their use over years on the land allocated to them by the local authority.⁷⁸ Many had family books demonstrating this use over time.

Location of Lor Peang community in Ta Ches commune, Kampong Chhnang province



⁷⁷ <https://www.citypopulation.de/php/cambodia-admin.php?adm1id=0405>

⁷⁸ Community notes

CHRONOLOGY OF ACTION AND RESISTANCE

This land conflict revolves around 108 families from the villages of Lor Peang, Beoung Kok, Samrong and Ta Ches, in Ta Ches Commune, who were affected by the seizing of their land by KDC International. KDC International is a Cambodian company owned by Chea Seng, wife of the Minister for Energy and Mining Suy Sem.⁷⁹ She is a senior member of the Cambodian Red Cross, which is run by Prime Minister Hun Sen's wife, Bun Rany.

The description below describes the events and actions from the perspective of Lor Peang community members which have shaped, challenged, and informed their experiences of their dispossession from their land and their struggle for its return. Of note is that with the changing numbers of complainants over the years the amount of land under dispute has also varied, however over 400 Ha of land has been consistently contested.⁸⁰

1996-2006: The land grab⁸¹

In 1996, the European Union funded the Rehabilitation and Support Programme for Cambodia's Agricultural Sector (PRASA) to rebuild an irrigation system from water sourced from the Kab Ses Dam. This water would flow into three communes, including Ta Ches, supporting 11 sub-dams in Kampong Tralach District, Kampong Chhnang. One of these dams flowed to Lor Peang village with the local villagers hired to dig the 2-km canal. This irrigation system was designed to support the farmers to expand their cultivated land, and to assist them to establish small plantations, water their livestock, and to strengthen their livelihoods.

In the same year, a local village chief approached villagers in Ta Ches Commune and purchased 196ha of land from the villagers. While the villagers were concerned that they would lose their livelihoods and did not wish to sell, some sold portions of their land under pressure from the village chief that it would be taken whether they acquiesced or not. A wealthy tycoon had funded the village chief to make these land purchases with payment

made to seven village chiefs to then be distributed to the villagers. The villagers were informed that a factory was to be built on the sold land and if the land was not used for this purpose within 3 years it would be returned to the villagers.

In 1997, the local officials demarcated 612ha of land and issued a title document in the name of an unnamed company, and vastly expanding the land holdings beyond those forcibly purchased from the villagers above. The villagers became aware of the land title claim in 2001 when 52 families⁸² filed a complaint to the district governor of Kampong Tralach against the Ta Ches commune chief, Ta Ches village chief, and the Beoung Kak village chief., saying that they had been forced to sell their land: "My land is there, I have not sold it, it is not part of this land title." In 2001, this same village chief claimed land from 19 families and sold it to a local authority in another commune and district. In 2002, legal complaints against 13 protesting villagers were filed accusing them of occupying and using the land illegally. They were summoned and detained by Kampong Chhnang Provincial court—a clear strategy of intimidation by the local authority and the court.

2006-2013: The KDC land grab⁸³

In June 2007, 512 hectares 54 Ares 20 Centiares (512Ha 54A 20CA) of land contained within the land title (105 lots) was sold and titled to KDC International. The community did not know to whom or for what amount it was sold. The village chief now working as a representative of KDC sent excavators to mark the boundary of 184Ha of land owned by 108 families living in the four affected villages along with police to intimidate any opposition by the villagers; KDC then started its direct blockage of villagers to their land. In addition, KDC coordinated the arrest of three villagers by local authority after they had tried to continue farming their land, an intimidation tactic which discouraged other villagers from trying to access their taken land.

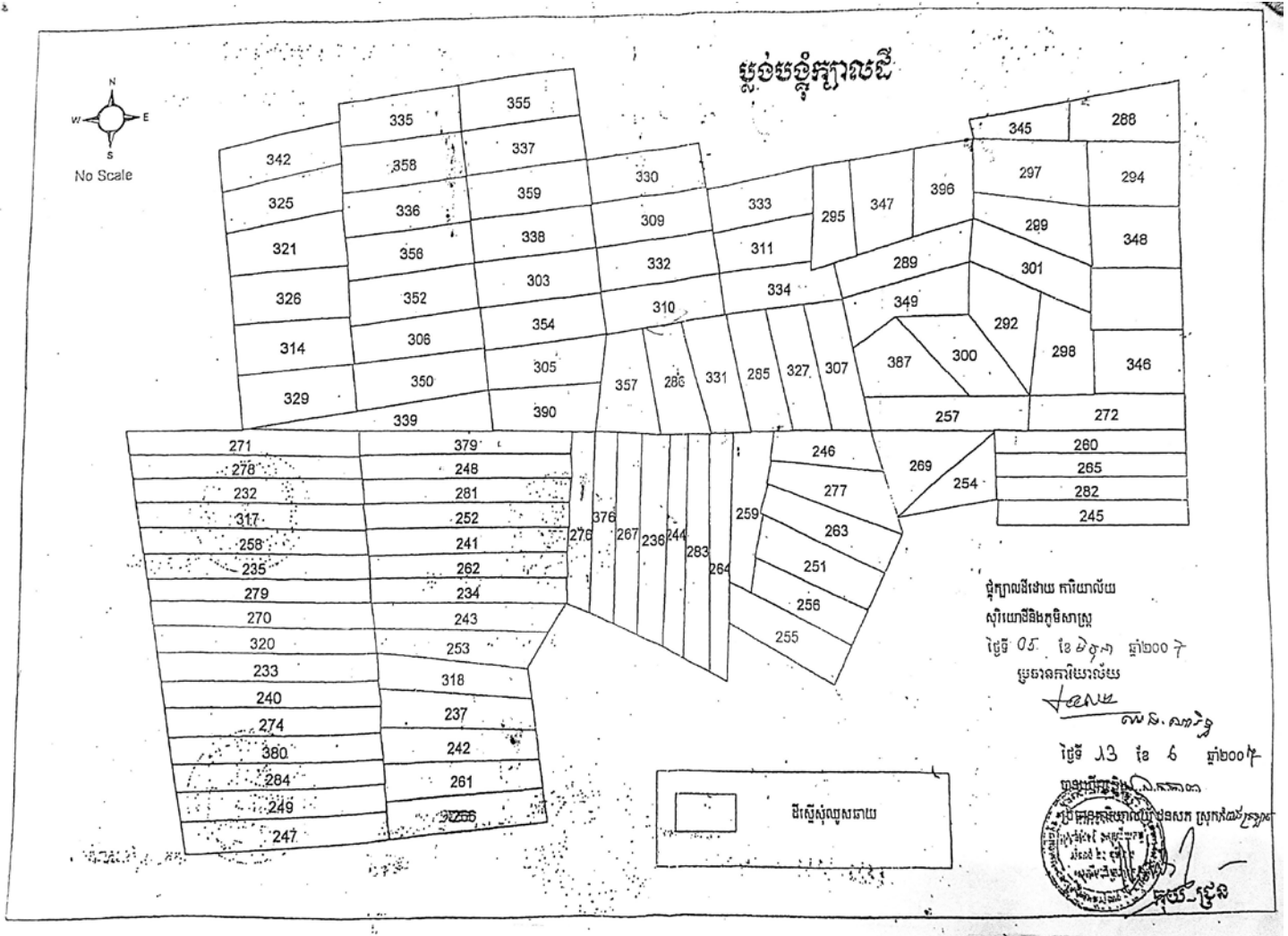
⁷⁹ Community notes, AFA 2012.

⁸⁰ Community Notes

⁸¹ Information in this section has been sourced primarily from AFA, 2012 case study on Lor Peang; LICADHO Activity Report Promoting and Defending Human Rights in Cambodia, Reporting Period Jan – Dec 2010; and NGO Forum, September 2014 Fact Sheet, Land Dispute in Lor Peang; and Community notes. Will not cite each source except when a direct quote.

⁸² The other households who lost land chose not to dispute because of fear – two of their leaders had been arrested.

⁸³ LICADHO, 2010. Reporting Period Jan – Dec 2010; and NGO Forum, 2014. and Community notes. Will not cite each source except when a direct quote.



Map of land title for KDC (2007) issued by Cadastral Officer.

KDC started a process of logging and destruction of villagers’ crops and infrastructure on the land. In response to these events, the 108 resisting families filed a complaint to the Kampong Chhnang court to demand their land back from KDC. They also submitted petitions to the District Cadastral Committee, Kampong Chhnang Provincial Hall and the National Land Authority of Dispute Resolution, which had response. Intimidation by KDC and the local authorities continued: two community members who were very active in pushing the complaints of the villagers forward were arrested in November 2007 with warrants issued by Kampong Chhnang court. Neither activist was represented by a lawyer when the judgements were made, sentencing them to 18 months in jail.⁸⁴ Other community members actively resisting the land grab continued to be threatened with warrants and legal actions, with one family losing four members as they fled overseas to avoid being charged.

Community representatives continued to strengthen their resistance, and in 2007 began to work with local

NGOs keen to support the communities’ efforts to resist and respond to this land grab and to call for intervention from the relevant authorities. At about this time, the Action Research Teams (ARTS) affiliated with the Cambodian Peace Network, already working on land, forestry and water resource conflicts in some areas of Cambodia, started to provide some support to community leaders looking to strengthen their organizing, analytical and activist knowledge and skills.

In March 2008, under orders from KDC, 50 workers and 100 police destroyed 14 houses without warning, forcibly displacing 14 households in Lor Peang village. They also cleared some hectares of rice paddy, household plantations including mango trees, coconut palm trees, and cashew nuts, and destroyed water-pumps, rice paddy dykes traditionally used to demark land, and ring wells. The belongings of these families were destroyed and residents brutally evicted, leaving some villagers with long term disabilities as a consequence. Supporting villagers were threatened with further violence while

⁸⁴ Chrann. C., 2008. Court upholds jail terms for villagers in land dispute case Mon, Phnom Penh Post, 15 September 2008

this action occurred, and they were not allowed to access assistance until the workers and police finished their task. Through the razing of these homes and land these families lost tangible evidence of their active presence as the long-term caretakers and users of this land.⁸⁵

Actions against the seizing of land by KDC through this period were led by the village chief of Lor Peang village.⁸⁶ She sought support from various provincial and national authorities through the submission of petitions and complaints, asking for their assistance with finding a resolution to the dispute. These petitions and complaints were ignored. She networked with influential government officials she had connections with, and was able to receive a response to the dispute from the Cambodian Prime Minister in 2008 through this informal approach. His response was to request His Excellency Chea Kheng, the manager of KDC International, to find an acceptable solution to the land dispute.

In 2009, the village chief was accused in a warrant issued by the Kampong Chhnang court at the request of KDC, of falsifying testimony submitted to the Governor of Kampong Tralach District on behalf of 77 households. On the advice of the District Cadastral office she had submitted this petition with the thumbprints from all 77 petitioners. The accusation was that some of these thumbprints were falsified. The community explained that some of the thumbprints were made by other members of a household representing for example, an absent petitioner away for work. Despite clarifying this with the court, she was charged with a crime and put in detention. With the support of a legal human rights NGO she was released in Sept 2010. This clearly demonstrated to the community that the court will use the law to protect the interests of KDC and harm anyone resisting the loss of their land.

In 2009, KDC continued to clear the disputed land and filled in the eight sub-dams originally built with EU funding in 1997. As a result of these years of repressive actions, pivotal land activists and many others affected by the loss of their land and insecurity in their communities

were forced to leave their homes and migrate for work.

In 2011 two local NGOs coordinated with the villagers to access the court system with 52 families from Beoung Kak and Lor Peang villages filing separate civil complaints to the Provincial Court. “NGOs helped raise the funds for the litigation costs (filing tax) which required those raising a land complaint to pay an estimated amount based on the value of the disputed land (\$US40/1Ha), an issue which likely deterred some families from submitting complaints.⁸⁷ In June 2011, the court dismissed the joint civil complaint from the villagers telling them to submit individual complaints. In July, the court called for US\$40/Ha fee from each of the complainants. The court would not waive the fee and instead raised it.” Further to this the court said it would need to establish an investigative panel to measure each family’s land.⁸⁸

2014 – The Marches⁸⁹

“Since this land dispute started, we have sent complaints to District Cadastral Committee in Kampong Tralach, authority, commune chief, district and provincial governors including other government institutions and the Prime Minister. We have sent 35 complaints to authority and government institutions and 63 court complaints, but there have no responses and no solution. Instead, the court arrested 4 generations of villagers, sent 6 people to prison, and accused 12 including one human rights staff member.”⁹⁰ (See Annex 4 for list of complaints/petitions)

In early 2014, community representatives from 16 families from Lor Peang village, still active in trying to resolve their land dispute, started to organize other villagers affected by the conflict to join their struggle. The ARTs organized a workshop at the request of the community representatives to assist the community to build their skills and knowledge so they could more effectively organize. Within 6 months of starting to speak with and organize affected villagers a total of 82 families had agreed to engage in the dispute seeking a fair resolution and justice. The original group of 16 were joined by two groups, (i) an additional 43 families who wished to negotiate for the return of their land and whose recent complaint filed at

⁸⁵ Chhay Channya, 2012. Plaintiffs called in KDC case, Phnom Penh Post, Jan 11 2012

⁸⁶ Cambodia League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO) Activity Report Promoting and Defending Human Rights in Cambodia, Reporting Period Jan – Dec 2010 <https://www.licadho-cambodia.org/reports/files/158LICADHOAnnualActivityReportJanJune10publicEng.pdf>

⁸⁷ Additional reference see Tep Nimol, Tues 16 August 2011, Villagers on the brink plead for assistance, Phnom Penh Post

⁸⁸ <https://opendevelopmentcambodia.net/news/court-again-frustrates-locals-in-kdc/>

⁸⁹ Information in this section has been sourced primarily from NGO Forum, September 2014 Fact Sheet, Land Dispute in Lor Peang; and Community notes. Will not cite each source except when a direct quote.

⁹⁰ From Summary of Complaint to European Union Embassy, Lor Peang Village, 30th May, 2014

the provincial hall and court had been rejected), and (ii) a group of 23 families seeking redress for inadequate and unpaid compensation. As reported by the NGO Forum, in March 2014 a Land Conflict Resolution Coalition Committee established by provincial authorities negotiated compensation details with 52 families represented by a local legal NGO. Of these, 35 families accepted compensation in April 2014. Of this group 23 felt that the compensation they had been given was not fair and angered by the process at the court and with the NGO working with them, they decided to take direct action themselves. This group had felt that the management of their complaint by their legal NGO representative had given them little choice and had not empowered them to represent their interests from a position of knowledge. They felt they had been led to believe that if they did not sell the land through this compensation process that they would

lose it without any money received, despite the amount offered being way below market value. Further to the injustice of the amount offered, the compensation money was never received by villagers who had accepted it.

The sections below detail the actions taken by community activists and the responses by KDC, local and national authority in 2014.

EVENTS OF JUNE 2014

- One of the Lor Peang community activists' first actions on 2nd June 2014 was for 57 families to put thumbprints to petitions aiming to seek intervention from 10 different embassies in Phnom Penh. On the 4th June 2014, three community representatives went to Phnom Penh to submit their petition to the European Union (EU) and other embassies. The response from KDC

KDC vehicles delivering supplies on the disputed land.



and local authority was swift and severe. On the morning of June 8, 300 workers employed by KDC and 200 military and police entered the village and cleared more of the plantations managed by villagers on the disputed land. Over 100 villagers congregated to protest these actions. As part of the attempt to divide their resistance the village chief notified villagers that this was the time for them to have their identity cards processed – a valuable document which gives access to government benefits and are difficult to obtain.

- On June 9, 70 villagers went to the provincial hall to file a complaint against KDC which was not accepted. On June 10th, these same villagers conducted a three-hour action on Highway 5, hanging banners along the road and slowing down traffic. The banners read “stop clearing land where there is a land conflict” and “the

courts must stop accusing Lor Peang villagers and activists.” Their goal was to publicly share information about the land conflict and to seek intervention from the government. Later that day district authorities accepted the villagers’ complaints and promised to find a solution.

- On June 18th, 14 community members from the Lor Peang group met with ARTs from other provinces and supporters in Kampong Chhnang town to plan for a meeting the next day called by the District Governor to discuss the land conflict. Eight-six families had joined the land dispute representing the three groups above and the best approach to present their differing demands needed to be determined. The community activists decided to present two different demands and positions. The first group consisted of the groups disputing the land grab and demanding their land back, with the second group demanding US\$10,000 in compensation for 1 Ha of land. On June 19th, community members and representatives presented their demands to the district governor whose response was that this was not a matter he could resolve as KDC had land title for the disputed land.
- In follow-up to this, on June 23, a group of 86 families went to Phnom Penh to submit a petition to the Office of the Cabinet of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Justice and to the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights in Cambodia. These petitions requested intervention on the land conflict and just compensation from KDC. They stated that the government and KDC had demonstrated no commitment to resolving the dispute and had instead tried to silence community leaders and activists through the use of payments to buy their silence, and the threat of arrest.
- The community then decided to follow the advice from the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC) to lodge a complaint at Phnom Penh Municipal Court. In the past, they had not undertaken this due to the cost of court proceedings. A further obstacle was the distance to the court when trying to monitor the case. The land tax required was paid to the court by the 43 community members who had undertaken fundraising for this. No response to the submitted complaint has been received by the community. While these actions were occurring, three Lor Peang land activists were accused of criminal intent to prevent local authorities from performing their duties and the destruction of a GPS system being used to demarcate the land. Support was provided by legal human rights NGOs for these activists.



EVENTS OF JULY 2014

- Further to the above intimidation, in the first week of July, KDC International sent 100 construction workers to start building a wall around the disputed land. A clash occurred between the protesting villagers and the construction workers leading to a number of injuries. In response to this clash on July 7 approximately 200 police and military surrounded the house of a well-known land activist and community representa-

tive to enact an old warrant issued in 2009. Villagers however quickly mobilized around her house and she was not arrested. The military and police however prevented people from outside Lor Peang from entering the village and it was reported that the military had instructions to shoot at the villagers to disperse them. The escalation in the conflict led to a media release by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia.



KDC company workers build the wall around the disputed land.

UN expert calls for oversight and remedy on land concessions

DEVELOPMENT FOR CAMBODIA, BUT NOT AT ANY PRICE

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, Surya P. Subedi, today called on KDC International Company to halt a contested land development project in Kampong Chhnang province, and urged the Government to exercise proper oversight on land concessions and provide appropriate redress for those affected.

However, in this case, like many others land disputes that have been brought to my attention, I have documented convictions of community members and activists, whilst the company was able to seize possession of disputed land before a decision was rendered by a competent, independent body addressing the community's claims that the leased land is in fact owned by individual families.

Community members are negotiating compensation for land that they have already been dispossessed of, and are doing so under the threat of arrest.

I call on the company, KDC International, to immediately halt development of contested land until all claims by individual families have been properly assessed by an appropriate independent body in a fair and transparent way. Furthermore, I call on all sides to show restraint and to avoid confrontation and further violence.

The Royal Government of Cambodia is obliged under international human rights law to protect against human rights violations, including those committed by private enterprises. Too often, court cases submitted by families contesting ownership of land with wealthy business owners are denied their day in court, whereas those filed by the company against the villagers have been diligently processed and resulted in numerous convictions.

[Excerpts from media release by OHCHR, 10 July, 2014]

On July 17th, the Lor Peang community conducted a press conference in Lor Peang, which was attended by approximately 100 people including villagers, community NGOs, the UN High Commission of Human Rights based in Cambodia, and media. The focus of the press conference was to “draw public attention to the dispute, to state their demands for a fair solution and resolution to their dispute, and to denounce the building of the wall by KDC and the tactics used.” The media event finished when the villagers and workers clashed with the KDC workers firing sling-shots, resulting in 20 injuries across both sides.

- On 21 July two villagers were arrested on charges of intentional violence and destruction of company property. The arrests were undertaken by over 100 police officers who arrested each villager in their homes. “The police officers reportedly did not show an arrest warrant or state the reason for the arrest. The police told the villagers that if they wanted to know the charges, they would have to go to the provincial police headquarters.”⁹¹ (See Annex 1)

⁹¹ Statement issued by: Community Peace Building Network (CPN)-CDPS, Community Legal Education Center (CLEC), Focus on the Global South and United Sisterhood Alliance (US), Phnom Penh, August 4th, 2014

Message from the Lor Peang Community, during the press conference on July 17th

*“We are farmers, if we cannot farm there will be no meaning to our lives.
We need a real investigation to address this land dispute.
Please come to investigate the real facts. Who is wrong, and who is right?
The longer the land dispute continues, the more prolonged our suffering will be.
We lack food.
We need your humanity.
When we stand near our land, police say we are wrong.
If we take action, we are wrong. If we do not take action this is also wrong.
We urge you to arrest all of us standing here.”*



Lor Peang community residents return to their land fenced off by KDC.

TESTIMONY

WHEN MY HUSBAND WAS ARRESTED

My husband was arrested at 6 in the morning. That morning he wore short-sleeves and short pants and was preparing to plough the rice field when two policemen came and called him to the edge of the road to speak with him. They told him to get on their motorbike and they took him away. I was busy preparing a meal behind my house when he went out but my young child came and told me that he saw the police take his father away.

When I heard this I called a legal NGO to ask for advice, and I was told to leave for Kampong Chhnang. I tried to find people in my neighborhood to accompany me but most of them had migrated for construction work. My brother-in-law and I left for Kampong Chhnang and arrived at the provincial court at 1pm. I was so shocked and unable to say anything when I saw my husband undressed and detained in a room. The Custody chief told me that Mr Thai Hui had requested my husband be detained there.

My husband had not actively joined in the protest related to the land dispute. He had joined the activists about two weeks before he was arrested. He told me he was handcuffed behind his back and told not to move. Then he told them if he wanted to move and run away he could have, but he had let himself be caught easily.

I knew that this arrest must have something to do with my father who is taking the company's side. He was unhappy that my husband was not helping my father in his rice field because he had to work in ours. Although we worked in his field he was unhappy with us since we don't talk often to him and our relationship is not so good since we have lived separately.

I am so worried that my husband was arrested without any warrant. On the day the conflict happened there were many people who battled the construction workers who were building a gate, but my husband did not join in. Why did the police arrest him? Kampong Chhnang Provincial judge is unfair that he calls only one side to go to trial and follows what the company wants. The court is partial to the rich.

Now my children have nobody to take care of them at home. Because my husband was arrested I can't stay but have to travel with the Lor Peang community to Phnom Penh to demand the release for all innocent detainees and to ask the government to help us solve this land dispute for us. Why is there such injustice? We just want to protect our land but as a result we were detained.

I went to visit my husband in custody again and told him we are in Phnom Penh to actively petitioning to reach a solution and we still continue to submit petitions to other places. I encouraged him to wait for another week to see if there is any intervention.



The march to Kampong Chhnang Court

EVENTS OF AUGUST 2014

The March to Kampong Chhnang Court

On 5th August villagers from Lor Peang, Sorovong, Beung Kok and Samrong villages marched to Kampong Chhnang court—a days' walk—to ask the court to release the two land activists from their unjust and illegal detention. They were joined on the outskirts of Phnom Penh by both independent monks and the Beung Kok land activists from Phnom Penh who had come to show their solidarity and support.

They walked young and old. They walked with children carrying banners—“release our representatives back and please Prime Minister Hun Sen helps us to settle land dispute”—and people pushing carts with their belongings, rice and a microphone. They stopped at a pagoda in Kampong Chhnang, negotiated their stay and at 7pm started to cook rice for the children.

At 8am the next morning the villagers march continued. They made their way to the Provincial Governor's residence and through a microphone protested the arrest of their representatives and asked for the

authorities to intervene on their land dispute. The military police came however and attempted to push the villagers from the road. After 40 minutes of tussling, the villagers continued their march to Kampong Chhnang Court. The local residents came to the roadside to listen to what the villagers had to say and offered them noodles and water. One of the activists' children spoke through the microphone, “please release my father back, I want to see him. Who can support us when he is in the prison? My father did not do anything wrong.”

When they arrived at Kampong Chhnang court the villagers sat outside and discussed the last week of fighting with the KDC hired workers and the injustice of villagers being arrested but not the company workers. The next day, August 7th, they spent the day drafting a petition to submit to the court which was accepted in the late afternoon. The villagers agreed to return to the pagoda for the night.

On August 8th, they started their march back to highway 5 stopping at the provincial governor's house on their way to submit another petition. Close to it they were stopped by the police and told to turn around and head home. The police said that the gov-

ernor already knew about their situation and that he was going to take action to solve it. The villagers did not believe them and continued to make their way to the provincial governors' house, marching and speaking through their microphone. The police said that if they did not stop they would be arrested. As the villagers continued forward they were pushed by the police who brought in a pick-up truck to block their way. This truck accidentally crushed a cart and injured an elderly woman. When this occurred, the villagers berated the police with an elderly woman saying – “you are not Khmer, you have a mother, sister, daughter...at home, how can you do this. If you want to arrest us, just arrest all of us. We are not scared of you, please arrest us.” When one person finished speaking another continued with the wife of an activist who had been arrested saying “why do you do this, do you want to kill us? You don't know that my husband is in jail and that I have children to take care of, my children always ask me – when will he come home?” The police listened, some removed their helmets and others showed concern. At 11am

a provincial governor representative accepted their petition.

At the same day, three Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) and Cambodian People's Party (CPP) lawmakers and parliamentarian members travelled from Phnom Penh to meet villagers at Kampong Chhnang. At 3.30pm they also accepted the villagers' petition and the CNRP parliamentarian hired trucks to take the villagers back to their homes.

Upon their return the community representatives agreed that they would march to Phnom Penh at the start of the next week. 70 villagers—men, women, children, elderly—started to marching on Monday 12th August towards Phnom Penh. About 7km from the village they were stopped by local authorities and military police with batons, tasers and long sticks. The villagers were beaten with some seriously injured. Three villagers were arrested and taken to Kampong Chhnang Court and put into detention.



Lor Peang residents reach Kampong Chhnang town.

The March to Phnom Penh

One of the land activists and community leaders explained later, *“I wasn’t able to make a decision—should I go to Kampong Chhnang and protest the villagers arrested, or should I go to Phnom Penh. At 2pm a monk called me and ask me what my purpose was and the direction I was going to march? My response to him was that I would go to Phnom Penh as this is where I can share the situation of our community and our land dispute and inform the most people. My direction is Phnom Penh. I know that this is not what everyone wants, I know that some of you want to go help our friends who have been arrested, but I am firm in my decision to march to Phnom Penh.”*⁹² Fifty-two villagers agreed to join her. They reached the outskirts of Phnom Penh at 7pm that night at stayed in a pagoda.

In the morning of 13th August an opposition party (CNRP) parliamentarian came to offer food to villagers and promised to help them resolve their land dispute issue. The villagers were also joined by supporters and observers, including the Phnom Penh Beoung Kok land activists, the monk independence network, ART members, and the media, as they continued on their march. They were stopped in Russey Keo District by the District Governor and ushered into a local school where he informed them they could not allow them to pass into the city as it was an economic zone and would create a bad image in the community, but that he would help them submit their petition.

At this time, the group was joined by eight villagers from Lor Peang who told of the police and authorities active presence in their village and the difficulty they had had leaving, with people being prevented from entering and exiting.

The villagers decided to continue to march despite being told that they could not be protected if they marched without a permit. 3km from the Russey Keo District they were blocked again, this time by military police who had established a road block. Two national CNRP parliamentarians came to listen to the villagers speak about their land dispute. The villagers then pushed through and continued to

march, they then pushed through subsequent road blocks set up by the police. Villagers were beginning to faint as the situation became more difficult. At 4pm the villagers and supporters reached the Beoung Kok Center in Phnom Penh. While a very difficult day, the villagers felt that many people had become aware of their struggle because of their actions. Between the 14th and 18th August the community rested and organized themselves.

Due to the radio and print coverage of the Lor Peang march, land activists from across Cambodia descended on Phnom Penh with petitions and complaints for the government and courts, leading the Prime Minister on 18 August, 2014 to say on television that he had never received any letters about land disputes.⁹³ In further television appearances he requested the provincial authority to resolve land conflicts.

On the 19th August, the Lor Peang community held a press conference at the Beoung Kok Centre at 9am. Surrounded by banners and supporters they demanded the immediate release of their five jailed representatives and for the courts to no longer arrest protesters. They also appealed to the government and members of the National Assembly to take appropriate measures to resolve their land conflict with KDC, to stop the construction of a wall on the disputed land, for the military police to urgently withdraw from their villages, and for their lives to no longer be threatened. They then continued to raise awareness about the history of their land dispute and demands on radio talk shows.

On 21st August the CPP Kampong Chhnang lawmaker accompanied by the Phnom Penh Deputy Governor and Deputy Doun Penh District Governor negotiated with the Lor Peang villagers in Phnom Penh, requesting to know more about their petition and case, and urging them to return to Kampong Chhnang. The villagers refused—*“if you had helped us earlier we would not need to be here in Phnom Penh. We have asked you to help us many times but nothing has happened. We will not go back until we get a positive response to our demands.”*

⁹² Community Notes

⁹³ See Sokheng, V. and Ponniah, K., 2014. The buck stops elsewhere, Phnom Penh Post, Tue, 19 August 2014 and May, T., 2014. Land row vow sows doubts and hope, Phnom Penh Post, 2 September 2014.



Lor Peang farmers march with their children on the streets of Phnom Penh.

On 22nd August Lor Peang communities accompanied by Beoung Kak community representatives marched through Phnom Penh to deliver a petition to the Council of Ministers. On the way there, military police again came to block their path. The land activists divided into small groups. A few groups reached the Council of Cabinet and were received by the Deputy of Municipal of Phnom Penh who promised to hand it to His Excellency Sok An, Minister of Council of Cabinet. At the same time, a small group of Beoung Kak land activists were harassed by the military police who said to them—“you are disorderly and create bad image for society.”

On 25th August, the Lor Peang community, Beoung Kak and Bory Keila communities marched together to the Ministry of Justice and the National Parliament to submit their petitions. They were joined and observed by the media and NGO members. At the Ministry of Justice, the community waited at the gates for a representative to take their petition while children spoke into microphones—“release, release, release...my father back, he has not made a mistake.” At the National Parliament after waiting an hour, they submitted their petition to an administrative official, and then spoke to the media—“I feel hopeless because the administration requested us to submit our petition to them, and did not allow us to meet and talk to the parliamentarians. We have come here

many times but they still ignore our issue. We will come back again after a week if we do not receive a positive response. We will not stop our demanding a solution (to this land dispute).”

On 26th August, the activists marched to the Cabinet of the Prime Minister. As they approached the main road the military police offered to pay for the activists to take tuk tuks (supported by the district governor), so that the road would not be blocked by their march. When they reached their destination an official

from the Cabinet of the Prime Minister received their petition. The activists said that they felt they had received some recognition from district officials.

On 29th August, the five land activists from Lor Peang were released by the Kampong Chhnang Court after the court received a letter of intervention from the Ministry of Justice, in turn responding to a letter by the CPP parliamentarian based in Kampong Chhnang. On the 30th August in the morning, the released land activists arrived at the Beoung Kok Centre in Phnom Penh where villagers and monks greeted them with a traditional ceremony. The released activists spoke to the media to explain their situation, including one activist who was not involved in the clash in Lor Peang between KDC International workers and villagers but was arrested because he was a land activist.

EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER, 2014

- On 1st September, 2014, the Lor Peang representatives received an invitation to meet at the National Assembly 1st Committee (2 CNRP and 2 CPP members). These parliamentarians felt they could assist to resolve the land dispute for individual families, but not as a group. They requested from each family their land receipts, family books and procurement documents. The villagers made the point that these documents had been submitted many times in the past to authorities.

- On 4th September, the Provincial Governor called six activists to discuss the land dispute, however some were still in Phnom Penh awaiting an update on their petitions. With the absence of some key activists the Governor focused on a solution for the original 16 families. Those seeking compensation were told to desist, while the additional 43 families were told that their claims would be investigated. He proposed a possible solution where he would ask the government for social land concessions for those who did not have land.
- The next day in preparation for the meeting with the National Assembly 1st Committee the community discussed and received their statement and demands for discussion with the support of human rights legal NGOs.⁹⁴ On 8th August community representatives met in Phnom Penh to discuss the outcomes of the above meeting. A representative from the Provincial Council called to consolidate the Lor Peang demands. He felt the company would not return any land but that they would be willing to pay money, and asked the villagers what their asking price was per hectare. The Lor Peang representatives took this information back to discuss with their community, however the activists were committed to the return of their land

Throughout this period KDC made no use of the land now surrounded by the wall and completely cleared.

2015– PRESENT⁹⁵

In early 2015, the community became aware that KDC had received authorization in 2013, to turn the land surrounded by the wall built in 2014 into a Special Economic Zone (SEZ). See Annex 3 for details.⁹⁶ They also became aware that the investigation into the Lor Peang land dispute conducted by the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC) in 2014 had reached the same conclusion as the SEZ allocated in 2013 to KDC – that 470Ha of the land claimed by KDC through the 2007 land title was not under dispute and was legally the property of KDC.

The community submitted a petition in 2015 to the Chinese ambassador to request the Chinese government (i) to pressure the Cambodian government to resolve the land conflict, (ii) for the government to cut 219Ha from the SEZ for the community members and (iii) to prohibit Chinese investors from working with KDC International. In January 2016, the 1st National Commission of Parliament invited the original 16 families resisting the land conflict to receive information about a social land concession (SLC) to be granted to the group. The group refused to consider the SLC as the land was infertile and had no infrastructure nearby. Families were also invited to meet with the National Assembly Human Rights Commission to discuss compensation packages of between US\$ 375 to \$1500, which was also refused by the villagers as an insufficient amount.⁹⁷

In 2017, FGS and ARTs are working with villagers to prepare them for a court case at the provincial court. Ninety-six households have submitted a complaint. They have a lawyer representing them but it is not yet clear if the villagers will be asked to go before the judge individually, which can be intimidating, or if one or two families will be asked to represent the case. They are hopeful that there are still strategies they can use through which they can find a favorable resolution to their land dispute. They know what their land is worth. They also have a realistic understanding of the process and challenges they face and that nothing may be resolved any time soon.

KDC International has not yet made any use of the land, except to clear it. As of March 2017, some community members believe that the disputed land is being held in a speculative manner as the value rises with its closeness to Highway 5 and the Tonle Sap and developing improvements to the transportation system through Cambodia – river ports, roads and a possible upgrade to the airport in Kampong Chhnang. They have no information about the SEZ or any planned developments for the land except that KDC paid villagers in 2015 to plant 5Ha of biofuel crops as a pilot agro-industrial crop.

⁹⁴ The Lor Peang representatives had 8 points they wished to make at this meeting – (i) they wished to demand land parcels for all 82 families, (ii) for the arrests and accusations of activists to stop (iii) a public settlement process that included the participation of NGOs and Human Rights Organizations (iv) compensation for those whose houses were destroyed (v) to discuss the process through which KDC seized their land (vi) to request medical treatment for three land activists beaten on 12 August 2014 by military police, (vii) to stop company activities on the land in dispute (viii) to withdraw the military police from the village.

⁹⁵ The primary sources for this section are community notes with other references cited

⁹⁶ The SEZ is not listed on the CDC website with others, but it is listed with links to formal documentation on the open development website https://opendevdevelopmentcambodia.net/profiles/special-economic-zones/?feature_id=26 and is listed in another government document - <https://www.mpwat.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/2010-Overview-on-Transport-Infrastructure-Sectors-in-Kingdom-of-Cambodia.pdf>

⁹⁷ Pech S., 2016. Kampong Chhnang land dispute resolution hits snag, Fri, Phnom Penh Post, 29 January 2016

IMPACT OF THE LAND DISPUTE ON AFFECTED VILLAGERS⁹⁸

As documented in conflicts around the country, the impact of these disputes is tearing at the fabric of life for rural Cambodian families and communities. In Lor Peang this long running land dispute has had irreversible impacts on the affected households and on the harmony and relationships between community members. The community has endured daily injustice, loss, intimidation, insecurity and hardship for many years. They have

had to call on themselves to find the strength and perseverance over the extraordinary length of this conflict to resist and fight for the return of their land. They have had to take on new and insecure roles and responsibilities as land activists and organisers, while also finding new ways to source a livelihood.

As Auntie described [box], the impact on families has been profound with the loss of land, decimating their

LOSS OF FREEDOM

Auntie lives in Lor Peang with her widowed mother, husband and four children.

For 2 months the authorities had surrounded the village, and like many others in the village, Auntie and her family were struggling to survive, unable to find work to earn enough money for food. She decided to join the march to Phnom Peng, while the rest of her family stayed in the village to take care of their house and to stay updated on local news.

Auntie's husband, a land activist, had been detained and held in custody since 2007. He was held for 3 years and emerged with a disability caused from a physical attack when he was initially detained by the authorities.

In 2008 KDC International without any warning arrived with heavy equipment and destroyed her house and rice field – about 5 Ha of land. She had used 4Ha as rice fields and 1 Ha as farmland. KDC employees also destroyed her food supply and rice, and even destroyed her rice pot which had been cooking rice.

The loss of her land and the ongoing land dispute brought tremendous hardship onto Auntie and her family with their source of livelihood taken away from them. They were further controlled in their ability to move to and from the village as authority monitored their movements in and out of the village. All of Auntie's children dropped out of school, with one child now a full-time carer for his father. They have two children who are earning money for the family – both at the shoe factory on national road 5 not far from Lor Peang village.

Auntie thinks that before the land dispute her families' livelihood was better. They worked as a family to cultivate the rice in the rainy season then planted cucumber, watermelon and sweet potato after harvesting, providing enough income for the family and keeping the children in school.

She believes that the protest in Phnom Penh is one way to get the government to help solve their land dispute for poor people such as herself, ensuring their rights and freedom are respected.

ability to generate a livelihood (animals, cash crop and rice production) Loss of land was the loss of an asset against which loans could be taken and an inheritance for children could be planned. It was also the loss of a way of life and a connection to a place which is known and holds the history and traditions of a family and community – the past, present and future. In Cambodian culture, there is an understanding that one's inheritance must be managed and protected for long term interest, and if not protected it reflects poorly on the individual.⁹⁹

For some of the Lor Peang community, loss of land left families without any land, or with plots of land too small to generate a sustainable income for families. It left families to adapt to new circumstances without warning,

⁹⁸ The primary sources for this section are community notes with other references cited

⁹⁹ Dr. Hean Sokhom, 2015.

trying to meet the urgent demands of food, housing, health care expenses and school fees, leading to debt, increased vulnerability and forced economic migration.

As with Auntie's family, migration has become a common solution with children and parents leaving for construction and factory work within Cambodia. Family members are also turning to regional migration, in particular in Thailand to work in a range of industries including the fishing industry where they are vulnerable to exploitation and poor labour conditions.

Community members have shared that some have gone and not returned.¹⁰⁰

As reported in the Phnom Penh post in an interview with a Lor Peang community member in May 2011, approximately 90% of the sons in the village have crossed illegally into Thailand to find money to support their families.¹⁰¹ As quoted in this article, Phil Robertson of Human Rights Watch Asia Division identified "the fact that men and boys from this area are now rolling the dice to try and earn money on Thai fishing boats, where trafficking is rife, is a good indication of their desperation... it is feeding the human trafficking industry in Thailand... it is depriving families of their husbands, sons and fathers who go to Thailand to try to earn money and never return." As occurred in Lor Peang, even key activists at times were forced to migrate for income and in response to insecurity and the risk of arrest.

With the break-up of families and loss of income, the well-being of all family members was acutely affected, especially of children, for whom life has irreversibly changed. As explained by a community member to a reporter in 2014, "*What future will our children have if our land is grabbed? They cannot go to school since their mothers needs to protest. They do not even have rice to eat. That's why I sent my son to become a monk.*"¹⁰²



Women residents of Lor Peang perform a traditional ceremony.

The impact of the land grab on the Lor Peang community has been compounded by the ongoing intimidation by company security forces preventing the movement of people and creating an environment of repression and fear. Not only has social cohesion in families been tested but solidarity across the affected communities has been impacted, with the presence of the company and long term disturbance and insecurity a concern for all.

Farmers like Auntie viewed themselves as the caretakers of their land, and had sought to managed it so as to preserve and improve its productivity for the future. Much of the land taken from Lor Peang villagers has had its habitat destroyed and then left fallow, an indication that the land is only valued as a commodity for speculation, but for the villagers who see themselves as the guardians of their land, it is a further tragedy to manage.

Loss of land impacts on a farmer's role and ability to fulfill one's responsibilities within one's family and community, while the loss of land without warning, fair compensation or effective remedy has created long lasting harm for the Lor Peang community. As Auntie has indicated above, activism is both a necessity as the only way to fight for a fair and viable solution to the land grab, and an opportunity to take back some control over one's future.

¹⁰⁰ See May T., 2011. Young men face the brunt of land disputes. Phnom Penh Post, Friday September 30, 2011.

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² May T., 2014., Children paying price in land rights fight, Post Weekend, Phnom Penh Post, Saturday 30, 2014

CHALLENGES AND RESISTANCE

The outline of the case study presentation above demonstrates the resilience and perseverance of the resisting community and paints a picture of the changing nature of their activism as shaped by the impacts described above and the time, resources, security and political environment over this period.

The Lor Peang experiences reinforces what the recent research on land disputes has found, that the villagers have little power in the governance or legal system through which to successfully seek justice, against the power of a company backed by the support of local, provincial and national authorities, and a corrupted policy and governance system that enables uncontrolled development to benefit the powerful elite in Cambodia.¹⁰³ As explored below, time and again the Lor Peang community experienced the wielding of judicial, military, government, political and private interest power as they sought formal and informal solutions to their land dispute. Specific challenges highlighted by their experiences outlined above include:

• PROOF OF LAND TENURE

The case of Lor Peang clearly depicts the vulnerability villagers face when the regulation and legal frameworks establishing formal land tenure are not rapidly enacted to ensure rural communities receive a fair, just and accountable determination of their land tenure, thus granting them formal ownership and rights. What physical ownership could be demonstrated was bulldozed away by KDC, while their family books were repeatedly requested and ignored, and local authority with the power and responsibility to know about the demarcation and use of land by their village members largely colluded with KDC, and failed their communities. Their identities and lives, so closely tied to their land and roles as farmers, were made invisible.

• THE COMPANY

As the events outlined above makes clear, over the years there have been changing approaches to the seizing of land in the Lor Peang communities by KDC. At a local level in the early years the land was purchased in small areas across communities by a broker who was also a member of the local authority, funded by a Cambodian tycoon. Traditionally the village and commune chiefs

have been the repositories of knowledge about the use of land and boundaries between villagers. In a period without formal land title and a burgeoning demand for land as a market commodity, the villagers of Lor Peang were able to be exploited by the local authority. Some local authorities were supportive as seen by the village

WHERE IS THE JUSTICE

My husband was arrested in July 2014. On that day, about 100 provincial authorities surrounded the road and my house. They did not have a warrant to arrest him. Local authority and provincial police arrested him regardless, at our house. My neighbours could not help as the authorities had surrounded the area. My mother-in-law almost fainted when this occurred and no one could help.

I am a seller at home and have never joined in the land protests. I have children to look after and am pregnant. My husband always told me to “pleased do not worry, these days no one can arrest anyone without a warrant, it is illegal. Before an arrest the judge has to issue a warrant to arrest.” I do not feel afraid because I believe my husband is innocent. On the day he was arrested he wrote down several phone numbers for me to call. I called an organization that can provide legal assistance and they said someone would be sent the next day to help my husband.

I think this sort of arrest is like kidnapping someone from their home. At least they told me what my husband has been accused of and that there was a legal warrant. The authority and judges must get along very well with the company if they produced a warrant after my husband was already in custody.

After meeting with a legal representative, I realized my husband was accused of destroying the company’s property and causing injury. What about when the villagers accused the company of several land grabbing cases, and we have never seen any intervention or solution. Why is that so unfair? This accusation Is not correct. My husband only went

¹⁰³ Guttal, S., 2008., Licadho, 2009.

chief who attempted to challenge the handover of land, however pressure from the company was applied for her to desist in the form of monetary compensation, threats and then imprisonment. In Lor Peang, the local authority and company broker sold the land to KDC, who then took their land after obtaining a land title from local authority and officials. Finally, some years later in 2013 they further cemented their control of this land through the granting of a Special Economic Zone. KDC also deliberately ensured as many of its strategies were as invisible as

to protect our land and it's not reasonable that the judges didn't understand about this.

I decided to join this protest after the day my husband was arrested. I felt a lot of pain while my husband was in custody and there is no sign of a solution to this land dispute. I went to meet Lor Peang community and discussed what I can do to help and where the activities will take place. I felt relieved as I joined the meeting in the morning and went back home at night.

I am challenging this with the hope that the judges will definitely release my husband one day. I joined the marching to Kampong Chhnang Provincial court with everyone and shared information via radio stations to demand an intervention from the government to solve this land dispute, release the land activists, withdraw the troops from the village and stop the company from building a wall on our land.

We are very committed to travel to Phnom Penh this time and if we do not get any fruitful response we will not go back. We will keep going until we reach a solution.

In August I went to visit my husband in custody in Kampong Chhnang. He said he did not have enough to eat but he did not want to worry me. He said that if others can survive he can also. We did not cry when we met but when my eldest daughter entered the room and said "daddy, I hardly recognize you, you look so skinny", he started to cry. He has lost 6kg in custody. He struggled when our daughter said she might drop out of school. She said that her father is a great man, a land activist and she will not feel ashamed but will demand justice for her father.

possible to the community. Through the manipulation of formal land tenure mechanisms, they "legalised" their land grab and then combatted any resistance by the community through;

- Threatening and imprisoning activists and supporters through the court system
- Building physical barriers to prevent access to the disputed land and patrolling it
- Threatening activists and intimidating the community through the use of local authority, military and hired workers to actively harass community members and prevent movement into and out of the village at certain times over the years, direct attacks on community activists at public actions.
- Clearly indicating to community members that their power and influence extended through the governance, judicial, and political system and that authority in positions of power would not overtly or covertly respond to their petitions and complaints (see below).

The company has not provided any benefit to the Lor Peang community over the years. Instead their land for the last ten years has been razed and left to lie unprotected and unproductive, for the last 4 years behind a wall, providing no benefit to anyone but KDC who will potentially benefit from it as a source of land speculation or income.

• ROLE AND POWER OF LOCAL AUTHORITY:

"Before KDC land dispute, we thought that government was good because we could live on our land and have a good livelihood and we could access nearby resources. But after KDC dispute, we see that the government does not pay any concern to the people and is not responsible. We cannot access our resources, we cannot live and farm our land, and we have to migrate. We have become poorer." (Community notes)

After the silencing of the village chief active in the early 2000s, it was clear that local authorities did not have the power or influence to challenge the power held by KDC, and were largely complicit through direct action or silence in supporting the company. It was a village chief who served as broker and facilitated the initial land grab at the start of the conflict, and commune and village authorities largely sought to repress the resistance actions of the affected community members. Petitions and concerns through formal processes and informal networks were passed upwards rather than dealt with at a local level,

generating tensions as the resistance progressed over the years between the national, provincial and local authority with the Prime Minister in 2014 calling on provincial and local officials to perform their roles to resolve the Lor Peang dispute when they garnered national attention. When directly responding to a call from above to resolve the land dispute, the Provincial Governor, while demonstrating a response, was unable to negotiate any outcome. This inability to act either demonstrates their lack of power and or unwillingness to influence change in the Lor Peang dispute with a politically powerful company.

• ROLE AND POWER OF DISPUTE MECHANISMS AND COURTS:

The experience of the Lor Peang community clearly demonstrates that the formal land dispute system is ineffective. Complaints accepted by the judicial system through the district and national courts have been ignored or thwarted through the creation of administrative obstacles (fees, investigations, relocation of cases to Phnom Penh forcing community members to travel, requests to resubmit in different formats), passing on of responsibilities to others, and the prompt use of their powers to directly threaten, accuse and arrest and imprison activists on alleged charges, at times without legal representation.

Even when a court case has received an outcome, as in 2014 when 35 villagers agreed, under duress, to compensation through a court process, the compensation is not paid and the amounts agreed to are vastly smaller than the actual value of the land. The community has explained that in 2017 the per hectare cost of land near Highway 5 is valued at US\$70,000. In 2014, they were offered US\$500 per hectare.¹⁰⁴ As highlighted by the experience of the Lor Peang activists, the powers of the district court in particular have been utilized repeatedly to deter the Lor Peang activists from accessing a fair legal process.

The use of the petition system reflects the more traditional processes preferred by the Lor Peang community when seeking a solution to the dispute. While they are willing to continue to utilize the formal dispute mechanisms available, the focus of their activism is to bypass

these ineffective and difficult Cadastral and court processes and to utilize networks, relationships and possible supporters to influence those with power on their behalf. As seen in the case with the village chief being accused of falsifying thumbprints on a petition, the petition process has been somewhat legalized. However, this same village chief utilized her networks to eventually elicit a response from the Prime Minister. Petitions were also given to embassies and donors and OHCHR with the hope that they would put pressure on the government about the violations and impacts of this land dispute on their community and to raise awareness about their demands.

With key people in Cambodian ministries at a national and provincial level changing over time, the community continued to petition so that awareness about their issue was maintained, while they also monitored the political environment for when there might be a more receptive response to a petition. Their experience demonstrates that a favourable political environment can assist at times also. For example, assistance in 2014 by supportive opposition parliamentarians led to safe passage for the marchers to deliver and have their petitions accepted, and also influenced the acceptance of their case to the 1st Committee of the National Parliament and the release of the activists in prison. To date however, formal and informal dispute processes have failed the Lor Peang community. Their experiences indicate that this is because of the power KDC wields in a system geared to protect their interests.

Arrested activists – Time in Jail			
#	Role in Community	M/F	Time in Jail
2005			
1	Land activist	M	3 months
2	Land activist	M	8 months
3	Land activist	M	3 months
2006			
4	Land activist	M	7 days
2007			
5	Land activist /Local authority	F	8 months
6	Land activist	M	6 years
7	Land activist	F	8 months
2014			
8	Land activist	M	More than a month
9	Land activist	M	More than a month
10	Land activist	M	More than a month
11	Land activist	M	More than a month
12	Land activist	M	More than a month

¹⁰⁴ Community Notes

•ROLE AND POWER OF LOCAL NGOS

Further complicating the search for fair remedies at times, is the involvement of local legal human rights NGOs. The Lor Peang experience identifies the invaluable assistance and support provided over the years by these organizations, representing activists in prison and land dispute claimants in different forums including the court. Some challenges however have also emerged from the Lor Peang experience, located in the differing agendas at times of these organizations to those of the land activists, and the inherent power a funded organization with essential expert knowledge can have over community activists. It is possible for pressure to be applied to encourage the activists to acquiesce to the desired outcomes of the NGO rather than an outcome that is truly representative of the wishes of the affected villagers, as seen in the compensation settlement in 2014. The agenda and processes of NGOs at times can overtake and negate the power the activist community hold as experts in their own situation and struggle, able to speak and plan for themselves. The case study events clearly make the case that the villagers have the capacity and right to represent and own their struggle and to be worked with as equal partners against a timeline that reflects the reality of their political, security and social justice environment and their goals.

• COMMUNITY TENSIONS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOLIDARITY

The buying up of the small blocks of land from some but not all villagers with some dissemination of money, was a method through which to generate tension between farmers in the community and led to individual and small group dispute complaints and petitions. With the condensing of the disputed land under a land title the articulation of the dispute shifted from individual claims to the larger group claims. These differing individual claims however can be seen in the differing hectares being disputed over the years, and also reflects the changing number of community members in a position to be involved as claimants in a petition or action. As discussed by the FGS representative, it became clear that a strength for the activists to challenge the company lay in their ability to organize as a group and to find a way to represent themselves with their different claims and experi-

ences, together. Collective complaints also reduced the amount of land tax they needed to pay when progressing complaints through the court. The struggle for solidarity between different groups of affected Lor Peang villagers – those who had never stepped back from the dispute, those who joined in the later years, those who had settled for meagre compensation and wished to appeal – has proven to be an ongoing tension and issue when planning for and negotiating with authority. Existing tensions within families were also exacerbated where as seen in an early case example, families were split in their support of the activists or the company.

Further to this are reported internal divisions which develop when gender social norms around women's traditional roles are challenged by strong women leaders and activists. In the case of Lor Peang this has been raised in the context of women with responsibility and accountability for funds and organizing being challenged because of their gender, by male leaders within the activist group. Men and women's roles in the households affected by the land dispute have had to adapt to their situation and created many female headed households with men having migrated for work, or arrested for their activism. Women have had to balance finding ways to support their families while also taking on the activist role necessary if they are to continue to fight for their land. As seen in the case study above it is often the children who bear the brunt of having two parents so drastically impacted on by the land dispute for example unable to attend school due to loss of livelihood.

The capacity of the Lor Peang activists for resistance has also been affected by the security and local political environment and their daily struggle for survival, as seen with the loss of key land activists in 2011-2013. This highlights the challenge of protection for the Lor Peang activists. The group activism of the Lor Peang community can potentially provide some protection for them, in an environment where the state protection mechanisms use their power to repress and harm activists, however it can also continue to harm them, as a visible presence can be easily targeted.

PROGRESS AND RESISTANCE:

“We are farmers, we are patient, we live with hope and the struggle continues”

(quote from FGS representative)

ACTIVE VISIBILITY:

The experience of the Lor Peang community indicates that, despite the repeated and repressive responses by most local authorities to the community members, they believe that ongoing dispute, appeal and education of the mandated authority with the power to resolve their land conflict with KDC will lead to some resolution and justice. In particular, they have identified the importance of raising awareness with new ministers within the RGC. As discussed above, at a minimum their repeated use of petitions and complaints has their dispute alive in the eyes of the broader Cambodian society and actively visible in the minds and work of local and national authorities. The community has identified that their activism in 2014 was particularly effective at bringing attention to their situation, however since then they feel their land dispute has become invisible again to the general public.

The combination of their use of formal and informal dispute mechanisms beyond the local sphere and into the provincial and national sphere, combined with their increased use of a range of resistance strategies, further enhanced their ability to keep their dispute visible. The successful use by the Lor Peang community of media (radio shows, press conferences, print media interviews), especially in recent years, where they encouraged media, UN Office for Human Rights in Cambodia and INGOs to attend media events in Lor Peang managed by them, and then to cover them on their actions, greatly raised their profile and gave them a broader platform to share their situation, challenges, struggle and bravery widely. Their growing links with other land rights activists both in Cambodia and regionally, has more broadly linked them to a mobilizing force of activists and supporters. These connections enabled Lor Peang activists to feel that they were part of a larger struggle and as the ART network had done across Cambodia encouraged shared learning and solidarity and provided motivational support for a difficult struggle.

Other strategies they have used to great effect in coordination with media, as described in the case study presentation above, are non-violent demonstrations. These demonstrations have taken various forms – community

actions at specific locations like the Kampong Chhnang court house to protest the incarceration of their activists combined with the delivery of petitions and complaints; or outside of key ministries to demand that a petition be received; and demonstration on Highway 5 which at times includes obstruction of traffic. A pivotal strategy for the Lor Peang community was the use of marches in 2014 when they marched to Kampong Chhnang and then Phnom Penh – a group non-violent action reliant on effective organizing, leadership and strong community relationships. These marches were arduous and the activists were representative of the most vulnerable of their community members including elderly, children and pregnant women. They pushed through obstacle after obstacle and in the process made a memorable impression on the general public as authentic, committed, strong, wronged farmers fighting for justice and resolution to their dispute. The marches themselves evolved for the Lor Peang community as a strategy they could undertake as a united group without assistance from external groups, mobilizing their voices, their sense of urgency and the injustice of what they were experiencing in their local community. It generated attention from national parliamentarians, national ministries and authorities, and was commented on by international governments and media. Their demonstrations forced interaction with those in power – the acceptance of petitions, the release of activists, and the involvement of provincial officials to resolve the issue. It galvanized other land activists across Cambodia to descend on Phnom Penh to add their voices and petitions to those of Lor Peang and led to the continued strengthening of the movement for the preservation of land and other natural resources within Cambodia.

The use of modern media and technology – phones with cameras for photos and video – has also allowed the Lor Peang community to share their story and struggle more widely. It has enabled quick organizing when a rapid response to protest a particular event occurs e.g. a hundred villagers converging on an activist’s house being threatened with arrest. Solidarity between group members allows for these sorts of actions to occur, and supports provided through the ART has also encouraged the development of new leaders to continue the orga-

nizing work within communities so that their struggle is more sustainable. The marked increase in the number of families still actively pursuing a just solution to the land dispute – now 92 families – ten years after the dispute started with KDC, demonstrates the communities' resilience and motivation to keep working on internal and external struggles as they arise. They have also demonstrated their willingness to keep working with partners and to shape these relationships so that there is accountability, mutual support and recognition that they are the key players in their dispute—the farmers and activists and organisers of Lor Peang. In recent years, the Lor Peang experience demonstrates a shift in attitude and sense of their own capacity as the community directly organizes to challenge and questions authority, to keep their dispute actively visible.

THE ROLE OF THE ART MEMBERS

The work of the ARTs potentially indicates a way forward that empowers community members while providing some external facilitation and guidance as the community seeks to research, understand and learn so that they can take ownership of the decisions and actions in their struggle to reclaim their land. The story of the Lor Peang experience points to a strengthening in recent years of their internal and external organising in a very difficult environment. Key to the work of the ART members is the idea that there are no formal tactics, and that they respond to requests for assistance from the community that will assist them with their goals. Group actions are owned by the Lor Peang community and utilize the re-

sources they have. ART members in Lor Peang also took on an educational role sharing information about the land dispute to other community members, especially the younger members of the village, encouraging those who feel able to be involved. Some skill obstacles identified by the community include high illiteracy rates and the challenge of listening well to each other and preparing for actions. These are challenges which the ARTs and the FGS representative seek to address through skills building and support as identified as needed by community members. The community activists of Lor Peang have indicated that for some of them, it is their role as activists and organisers that helps them to maintain their connection to their land, and it provides a sense of hope that one day they will find fair and just solutions to their dispute. Of note however is that the security environment warrants the ARTs to identify themselves as community representatives rather than ARTs. The community in 2017 has also identified the ongoing challenge they face to stay strong in their internal group solidarity as they continue to fight for a just solution to the dispute while struggling in their daily lives. The impact of their loss is profound; the pain is deep, and the devastating effect on their sense of self and livelihoods difficult to negotiate as individuals, households and a community. Within this framework the community has identified their activism as necessary and providing them with some hope, while also creating an additional burden and challenges. The ARTs seek to work with their communities to help them manage this reality; a reality the Lor Peang community says is getting harder rather than easier.

CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS

Until corruption within the political and governance environment changes, the power through political connection and investment opportunism wielded by a company like KDC will be difficult for the Lor Peang activists to challenge. The overarching system in which the Lor Peang struggle sits recognizes neither the rights of Cambodians to security of tenure or access to a fair and just legal system at this time.¹⁰⁵ The Lor Peang activists are persisting however and in 2017 their numbers have swelled again to 96 households actively engaging the government to find resolution to the land conflict that is satisfactory to them. It is likely they will not have their demands met in the near future, yet they continue their struggle.

Some thoughts for consideration after reflecting on the Lor Peang experience, specifically their resistance:

1. Despite the repressive environment, the activists' continued activism and organising over the years—petitions, the 2014 march and media in particular—continues to effectively keep this dispute alive and visible in the broader Cambodian community potentially building greater solidarity, support and interest in their issue land rights. Advocacy also directed to international governments and OHCHR, while not strongly effective, does lead to some continued pressure being applied on the Cambodian government.
2. The Marches of 2014 did not use external resources, and actions were determined and shaped by the community within their resource constraints, creating one of their most effective actions to date. This points to the importance of communities recognising their own power and strengths rather than looking to external organisations and people to solve their problems, and to be the public face of their resistance working to understand and analyze the broader situation and environment in which their land conflict sits. Partnerships with supporting organizations with some expertise in how to do research and to connect the dots between events, is also important as the community grows and learns how to incorporate these skills into their activism. A possible question for partners and supporters is to find how they can best support the self-determination and ability of the Lor Peang activists to continue their struggle into the future?
3. Organizing and finding common ground within internal groups seems to have been an ongoing tension for the Lor Peang community. Their group actions where they analyze, discuss and compromise with each other to develop collective actions seem to have had the greatest impact and response from people in power. The Lor Peang experience indicates that it is harder to split communities and expand divisions if the community is organized and has empowering leadership.
4. The more fluid leadership structure supported by the ART membership can lead to multiple leaders with divided roles and responsibilities and provide a mechanism for all members to be heard. This approach however has also raised tensions as leadership and organizing is learned over time and shared principles can take time to agree on—such as acceptance of female leaders, what accountabilities are expected, the value of everyone's voice, active listening skills and organizing for collective actions. While the case study presentation does not clearly articulate the activists' organizing processes and issues, it identifies some obstacles and it is clear that the community has been working to resolve these. The splitting up of the affected community members into different groups with differing experiences of activism and demands due to external realities—migration for work, external organizations seeking remedies only acceptable to some villagers, court and Cadastral system moving between accepting small group versus collective complaints, and so on—while creating tensions between group organisers, has also led to this issue being discussed and worked on within the community.

¹⁰⁵ ADHOC, 2013.

5. While a repressive political environment for civil society action makes it difficult for land activists to focus more broadly on systems change, the Lor Peang community do seem to now see themselves as located within a bigger movement and context. While this is somewhat motivating it does not provide concrete relief for the Lor Peang community. This type of long term land activism led by those most greatly impacted calls upon a tremendous amount of emotional, personal and physical energy from the community in extremely challenging circumstances. As of 2017 community members are still galvanized but they also feel their situation is more precarious and their lives harder. While this case study has not assessed the livelihoods program run by ARTs, anecdotally it may assist with maintaining family cohesion and livelihood security, especially if supporting those most affected and designed to strengthen livelihoods without further burdening activists. Such steps may provide much needed relief so that community activists feel able to continue in their struggle for a just solution to their land dispute.

Lor Peang residents survey the damage to their farmlands from developments by KDC.



ANNEXES

Annex 1

4 August, 2014

UNJUST ARREST AND ILLEGAL DETENTION OF LOR PEANG VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES (LOR PEANG STATEMENT)

Statement issued by: Community Peace Building Network (CPN)-CDPS, Community Legal Education Center (CLEC), Focus on the Global South and United Sisterhood Alliance (US)
Phnom Penh, August 4th, 2014

We, the above organizations, were alarmed to hear that on 21st July 2014, Mr. Seang Heng and Mr. Mang Yav, who are the members of the Community Peace Building Network, were arrested by about 100 police officers at Lor Peang village, Taches commune, Kompong Tralach district in Kompong Chhnang province. At the time of the arrests, Seang Heng and Mang Yav were at their homes. Since 2006, the residents of Lor Peang village have been embroiled in a land dispute with KDC International, a private company owned by Ms. Chea Kheng, the wife of Mines and Energy Minister, Mr. Suy Sem. This dispute escalated to violent conflict between village residents and company workers on 07th July 2014, when the company started building a two-meter concrete wall around 182 hectares of land that villagers have farmed since the 1980s, and which was illegally acquired by Ms. Kheng in 2007.

The police officers reportedly did not show an arrest warrant or state the reason for the arrest. The police told the villagers that if they wanted to know the charges, they would have to go to the provincial police headquarters. It is reported that Mang Yav and Seang Heng were later sent to Kompong Chhnang Provincial Court at 9:00 am on 22nd July 2014. They have not yet been released.

Reports by village residents and in the local news

indicate that on 22nd July 2014, Mr. Seang Heng and Mr. Mang Yav were to be questioned by prosecutors and an investigating judge of the Kampong Chhnang Provincial Court regarding allegations of intentional damage to the property of KDC International and causing injuries during clashes to workers hired by KDC International.

While we condemn the violence between village residents and company workers, eye-witness accounts by human rights observers lead us to believe that village residents were provoked by some KDC employees who shot stones and iron chunks at village residents when they protested the construction of the wall. Further, we believe that Mr. Seang Heng and Mr. Mang Yav were arrested because of their attempts to prevent their lands from being taken by KDC International and not because of the damage of property and causing injuries to others. Seang Heng and Mang Yav have been active in land rights work since 2007 when KDC International started acquiring lands in the area. They have also been involved with the Community Peace Building Network since 2010. These arrests are yet another example of an alarming pattern of arbitrary arrests and detentions of rights defenders. Most frequently the victims of arbitrary arrest and detention are people who assert community members' rights in land disputes with

powerful corporate land concession holders, who are closely tied to and have influence with senior government officials.

Whether or not charges of intentional damage of property and causing injury are laid, Seang Heng and Mang Yav are entitled to the presumption of innocence and to release pending trial pursuant to the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Cambodia is a party. The right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty is recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 11.(1) and guaranteed by the ICCPR Article 14.(2). Freedom from arbitrary detention and the right to release is recognized by Articles 3 and 9 of the UDHR and guaranteed by Article 14.(2) of the ICCPR. These provisions of the UDHR and the ICCPR preclude pretrial detention except when detention is necessary and the only means to protect public safety, ensure attendance in court and/or prevent interference with evidence. Cambodia's Constitution specifically guarantees recognition and respect for the UDHR and the ICCPR, and stated in Article 38 that accused persons "shall be considered innocent until the court has judged finally on the case." Cambodia's Code of Criminal Procedure. Article 203 confirms these principles and must be read in conformity with the UDHR and the ICCPR. We are not aware of any lawful reason for the continued detention of Seang Heng and Mang Yav, and demand that they be released immediately.

Like others whose lands and livelihoods are being threatened, Mr. Seang Heng and Mr. Mang Yav are entitled to conduct peaceful human rights advocacy and be protected from all forms of retaliation including arbitrary arrest and detention, malicious prosecution and judicial harassment. The Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted on 9 December 1998 by consensus of the member States of the United Nations General Assembly, states that: • "everyone has the right, individually or in association with others, to promote the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels" (Article 12.1); • "everyone has the right, individu-

ally and in association with others, to participate in peaceful activities against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Article 1); • "The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration." (Article 12.2)

Therefore, we urge the Royal Government of Cambodia to: • Immediately release Mr. Seang Heng and Mang Yav from prison; • Unconditionally drop the false allegations for which Mr. Seang Heng and Mr. Mang Yav are being investigated; • Conduct a thorough and credible investigation of the events that have taken place in Lor Peang since 07th to 21st July 2014, especially the causes that triggered the violence on 17th July 2014; • Enforce the law equally to Lor Peang residents and employees of KDC International and arrest KDC employees who attacked village residents; • Ensure the physical and psychological safety and wellbeing of Seang Heng and Mang Yav.

We also urge the Cambodian government to ensure that all judges, prosecutors and other officials in this case are mandated and empowered to act independently and in accordance with law, including the legal obligations recognized and created by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ICCPR and the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary. The Principles articulate State duties to ensure judicial independence and impartiality and to prevent interference.

Finally, we request that the Government ensure: 1) the safety of all land and human rights defenders advocating for collective and individual rights to lands and resources; 2) an immediate halt to all forms of intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders including land rights advocates, journalists and others calling for adherence to Cambodia's international law and Constitutional obligations.

ANNEX 2

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE (SEZ) SCHEME

Regarding the basic concept and conditions for the SEZ, the SEZ Sub-Decree defines as follows (Article 2 and 3.1.3).

- SEZ refers to the special area for the development of the economic sectors which brings together all industrial and other related activities and may include General Industrial Zones and/or Export Processing Zones. Each Special Economic Zone shall have a Production Area which may have a Free Trade Area, Service Area, Residential Area and Tourist Area.
- It must have a land of more than 50 hectares with precise location and geographic boundaries.
- It must have a surrounding fence (for Export Processing Zone, Free Trade Area and the premise of each investor in each zone).
- It must have management office building and Zone Administration offices and all necessary infrastructures must be provided.
- It must have water sewage network, waste water treatment network, location for storage and management of solid wastes, environment-protection measures and other related infrastructures as deemed necessary.

Application Process for the Development of the SEZ

The Special Economic Zone may be established by the State, private enterprise or joint venture between State and private enterprise (Article 3.1.2, the SEZ Sub-Decree). Zone developer has to have the following ability and duties (Article 4.4, the SEZ Sub-Decree).

- Have sufficient capital and means to develop the infrastructures in the zone, including the human resources to manage the activities of the zone
- Have the legal rights to possess the land for establishing the SEZ
- Construct the infrastructures in the zone
- Lease the land and provide services to the Zone Investors
- Arrange security personnel and ensure good public order in the zone at all the time, etc.

ANNEX 3

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SEZ IN TA CHES COMMUNE

Source: <https://opendevelopmentcambodia.net/topics/special-economic-zones/>

Name of SEZ: **Zhong Jian Jin Bian Jing Ji Te Qu SEZ**

Province: **Kampong Chhnang**

District: **Kampong Tralach**

Commune: **Ta Ches**

Land area: **470.28 hectares**

Capital: **\$90,706,000**

Developer: **Mr. Chan An Drew**

Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) number: **767/13**

Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) date: **19 Apr 2013**

Sub-decree number: **466**

Date of sub decree: **22 Jul 2013**

Current status 2015: **Infrastructure developing**

Company investor: **Not found**

ANNEX 4

LIST OF LOR PEANG COMMUNITY COMPLAINTS AND PETITIONS FILED SINCE 2008

Complaints to Ministry of Justice (2013-2014)

1. 28 November 2014 (Number 473); Asking minister of justice to intervene on provincial court to issue injunction warrant on land conflict.
2. 02 September 2014 (Number 370); Seeking intervention on Kampong Chhnang Provincial Judges who issued a warrant to detention of 5 activists.
3. 05 December 2013 (Number 255); Suggestion to intervene on provincial prosecutors to delay criminal court case on three people name: Ngim Ngean, Reach Sima and Phoul Sorn.
4. 28 February 2013 (Number 92); Asking minister of justice to intervene on the Phnom Penh Court by delaying a criminal court case number 329 issued 18 October 2012.

Complaints to 1st Commission at National Assembly and Senate

1. 14 August 2015 (Number 075); Asking President of Senator to intervene on the Land conflict at Lor Peang community with 92 families.
2. 14 November 2014 (Number 33); Urging the 1st commission to proceed land conflict resolution for Lor Peang Community with 83 families.
3. 25 August 2014 (Number 3233); Asking National Assembly the 1st commission to intervene on 1). Release 5 land activists; 2). Finding solution for land conflict and 3). Stop accuse Lor Peang Community representatives.
4. 25 August 2014 (Number 152); Asking NA to intervene and put pressure on government that ignorance to solve the case of land conflict at Lor Peang community.
5. 02 August 2014 (Number unknown); Suggestion to intervene by releasing 5 land activists representative.
6. 23 June 2014 (Number unknown); Suggestion to intervene by stopping the wall's building of KDC company.
7. 04 June 2014 (Number 100); Suggestion to NA to intervene on Ministry of Land Management to solve land conflict at Lor Peang.
8. 29 September 2009 (Number unknown); Objective: Asking to transfer authority from Phnom Penh Court to Kampong Chhnang Court on case number 1882 issued on 13 August 2008 of Phnom Penh court and suggesting to intervene on Kampong Chhnang Court to delay criminal court case and take first action on civil case court.
9. 13 August 2009 (Number 306); Objective: complaint to KDC company had grabbing farm land and house land of 145 hectares from 64 families.
10. 11 August 2009 (Number 269); Asking NA to intervene on land conflict of 64 families at Lor Peang
11. 11 June 2009 (Number 174); Asking for intervene on court case with accusation to Ms. Oum Sophy on incitement from deputy-prosecutor and asking investigation judge to withdraw the accusation from her.
12. 07 March 2008 (Number 122); Asking National Assembly to intervene on clearing house of 14 families at Lor Peang village by Company.
13. 15 January 2008 (Number 18); Suggestion to NA to release Mr. Sar Song and Ms. Oum Tom from prison.

Petition to Ministry of Interior

1. 29 July 2008 (Number unknown); Asking to solve the land conflict that KDC company had grabbing house and farm land of 145 hectares from 64 families.

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