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**ARTICLE**

## Families, Activists Mark Sixth Anniversary of Veng Sreng Violence

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About 70 unionists, land activists, workers and rights activists gathered in Phnom Penh this morning to mark the sixth anniversary of security forces opening fire on striking workers on Phnom Penh's Veng Sreng Boulevard on January 3, 2014, leaving four dead, one missing and dozens injured.

Participants held a Buddhist ceremony and memorial service at the office of the Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL), which was also attended by several family members of the killed and missing workers.

The four workers who were killed are Kim Phaleap, Sam Ravy, Yean Rithy and Pheng Kosal. Another worker, Khem Sophath, remains missing and was last seen in the custody of security forces after suffering a bullet wound in his stomach. Sophath's body remains missing six years on, despite repeated requests for an investigation.

"I would like to call on all organisations to please help find justice for my family," said In Leakena, the mother of Khem Sophath.

The Buddhist ceremony was overseen by Venerable Loun Sovath, who discussed the state violence surrounding the 2014 protest and noted that even today, authorities used intimidation to prevent a public remembrance of the Veng Sreng killings at the site of the violence. He discussed the need for true peace in the country, free from intimidation, fear and state violence.

The day prior to the shootings, armed soldiers from Special Command Unit 911 beat workers and arrested 10 workers and union leaders in front of Phnom Penh's Yak Jin factory. Protesters were calling for a \$160 minimum wage. The violent crackdown on Veng Sreng, which coincided with the opposition's boycott of parliament due to the contested results of the 2013 election, left 38 people injured and hospitalized, in addition to the four dead and one missing.



Family members of workers killed by security forces during protests in 2014 place incense during a Buddhist ceremony.



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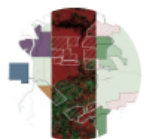
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"It has been six years and we have not found justice," said Keo Sokmeng, the mother of Pheng Kosal. "My son did nothing wrong, he just strived for a higher salary.

"Twenty-three union leaders and activists were arrested, charged and imprisoned for five months as part of the January 2014 crackdown on protesting workers. No member of the security or armed forces has ever been suspended or prosecuted for the deaths of the workers.

Union leader Vorn Pao, president of Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA) and one of the 23 unionists imprisoned in the crackdown, called on authorities to find justice for those wronged during the violence.

"There has been no justice for those who have died," he said.

MP3 format: [Listen to audio version in Khmer](#)

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