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VOA Khmer

# Unions to Mark 6th Anniversary Of Veng Sreng Crackdown

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FILE: Cambodian riot police prepare to confront with garment workers throwing stones and bricks near a factory on the Stung Meanchey complex on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Friday, Jan. 3, 2014.

**The garment worker protests, demanding \$160 per month minimum wage, had amalgamated with the opposition boycott of the National Assembly, leading to a severe crackdown in early January 2014, across the city on all the protestors.**

PHNOM PENH — Trade unions and worker groups will mark six years since mixed security forces [violently dispersed protesting garment workers](#) on Veng Sreng Boulevard and other parts of the city, killing at least four individuals.

Vorn Pao, president of Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association, said around 30 civil society groups would mark the occasion on Friday.

The informal worker representative was himself seriously injured during the crackdown, and said there was no way he could forget

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the skirmish because he had scars reminding him of his injuries.

“This is a story that we can’t forget... a direct [attack] on me, they beat me almost to death and the scar on my head remains intact,” he said.



FILE: A worker who had been taking part in a protest is escorted by Cambodian soldiers after clashes broke out, on the outskirts of Phnom Penh January 2, 2014.

The garment worker protests, demanding \$160 per month minimum wage, had amalgamated with the opposition boycott of the National Assembly, leading to a severe crackdown in early January 2014, across the city on all the protestors.

However, Chin Malin, a Justice Ministry spokesperson, said the protestors were violent and attempting to overthrow the government and those responsible were being held accountable

“So, the ones organizing and taking part in the demonstrations must be responsible according to the law. And this case is still under the judicial proceedings,” he said.



FILE: So Nang, 27, a Cambodian garment worker, receives treatment at Preah



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Kosamak hospital in Phnom Penh, January 6, 2014. He is a victim of the violent January 3 crackdown on striking garment workers in Cambodia. He has been shot in the stomach. (VOA Khmer)

Vorn Pao is among 23 activists and workers who were arrested during the violence, but later released, though the charges still remain.

While the government did not initiate an investigation into the violence meted out by security forces, the incidents have been documented in the European Union's preliminary findings on whether Cambodia should lose its "Everything But Arms" trade privileges.

The preliminary findings point to criminal charges filed against union leaders in relation to the protests and requests by the International Labour Organization to institute an independent inquiry in the allegations of killings and violence.

Instead, the report notes, that the government has called the protests as a "riot" and that demonstrators caused destruction to property and injured other people.

Theng Savoeun, director of Coalition of Cambodian Farmer Community, said Cambodian courts should drop all the charges against unionists and workers, if the government was serious about the findings of the EU preliminary report.

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