

# The Phnom Penh Post

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## Nine charged over NagaWorld protest

### NATIONAL

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Reporter : Long  
Kimmarita

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Laid-off NagaWorld employees are detained for protesting in front of the their former workplace in Phnom Penh's Chamkormon district. FACEBOOK

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The Phnom Penh Municipal Court has charged nine former employees of the integrated resort NagaWorld on January 3 with “incitement to commit a felony” in accordance with articles 494 and 495 of the Criminal Code that covers the staging of protests for more than 10 consecutive days.

A press statement released by the prosecutor’s office on January 3 alleged that the nine protesters had incited other fellow laid-off workers to actions that caused chaos, social disorder and social insecurity.

“Having investigated and collected evidence, the actions committed by [the suspects] violated article 494 and 495 of the Criminal Code.

“Based on the facts of the case and the letter of the law, the prosecutor’s office has questioned the nine individuals and has now charged them with incitement to cause a serious disturbance to social security,” said the statement.

More than 1,000 NagaWorld workers have been protesting since mid-December and demanding that the company reinstate 365 former employees who were laid off during the Covid-19 pandemic in what the workers claimed was a move that specifically targeted union leaders and activists.

The nine protesters were sent to court on January 3 following their arrest on December 31 as they were preparing to stage a New Year’s Eve protest in front of the casino.

“They were arrested and sent to court because we found that they were undertaking an illegal protest in front of NagaWorld, which affected public security, social order and social safety,” said municipal police spokesman San Sok Seyha on January 3.

The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUF) called on the Cambodian authorities to release the protesters and drop all charges against them which they said was retaliatory persecution for their union activities and protests.

A mediation group who sought to find a solution to the dispute during earlier negotiations alleged that the company ignored the workers’ demands and that the government had not followed the law or shown any real intention of solving these problems.

Heng Sour, spokesman for The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, said that according to the procedures, labour dispute mediation starts at the ministry level through mediation officials assigned by the labour minister if the case is negotiated over for more than four hours without the two sides agreeing to a settlement.

If no solution is found during mediation, then the case will be forwarded to the Arbitration Council. If they cannot find a solution, then the court can make a decision regarding the dispute and at this stage those involved in the dispute must file a case with the court to end the dispute with its verdict.

“It is important to understand and implement these procedures. If the procedures are wrongly implemented again and again, then it is beyond the jurisdiction of the labour ministry and the work dispute reconciliation officials,” Sour said.

He said the effort to find the solution over the period of December 18-28 had failed because neither side could come to an agreement after five meetings took place between them with mediators involved.

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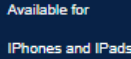



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





**SR Digital Media**  
#41 St 228, Phum 4 Sangkat Boeng Rang, Khan Doun Penh  
Phnom Penh Cambodia

Tel: Celcard: 078 555 166/ 078 555 133  
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