

# The Phnom Penh Post



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## Unionists honour Vichea's legacy

### NATIONAL

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About 100 people gathered in front of the statue erected to honour prominent workers' rights activist Chea Vichea on Wednesday.  **Heng Chivoan**

Union leaders and workers on Wednesday paid tribute to prominent workers'

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rights activist Chea Vichea in front of his statue at Wat Langka pagoda in Phnom Penh.

Vichea, who led the Free Trade Union of Workers, was shot dead on January 22, 2004. No one has been arrested for the murder. Every year, union members and workers come to Wat Langka, where the unionist was murdered, to celebrate his legacy.

On Wednesday, about 100 people gathered in front of the statue erected to honour the man, demanding that more is done to find and prosecute his killer.

Cambodian Labour Confederation president Ath Thorn who participated in the ceremony said finding Vichea's murderer was essential to safeguard the lives of union leaders in Cambodia.

"The authorities must ensure that unions are allowed to carry out their work and that workers' rights are respected. Laws that cut back benefits for workers must be stopped," he said, adding that the government must do more to end violence against union leaders.

Cambodian Confederation of Unions president Rong Chhun said human rights activists in Cambodia still face violence and persecution.

"The government must work to protect the rights and freedoms of union leaders and workers and recognise the difficulties they face," Chhun said.

He said workers and unions should have a bigger say in the drafting of laws that concern the labour force.

Ministry of Interior spokesman Khieu Sopheak told The Post on Wednesday that the authorities are working hard to answer unionists' demands, guarantee the safety of activists, and find Vichea's killer.

Vichea was shot dead at a newsstand near Wat Langka pagoda. He left behind a two-year-old daughter and a pregnant wife who later left the country.

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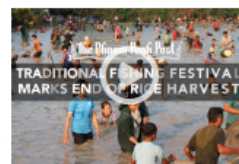
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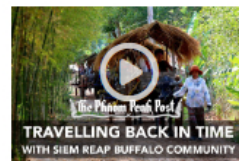
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**Post Media Co Ltd**

The Elements Condominium, Level 7  
Hun Sen Boulevard  
Phum Tuol Roka III  
Sangkat Chak Angre Krom, Khan Meanchey  
12353 Phnom Penh  
Cambodia

Tel: Celcard: 078 555 166/ 078 555 133

Smart: 086 822 999 / 086 277 999

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