

# Unions urge stricter enforcement of building standards after 36 deaths

9 January 2020 4:34 PM | Yon Sineat



Prime Minister Hun Sen sit near the building collapses on Kep rovince on January 03, 2020. A man stand behind prime minister and ware light blue shirt is Ek Sam Ol, older brother of the building owner Ek Sarun. Facebook



Labor groups on Wednesday called on the government to more strictly enforce building standards to prevent future tragedies like the building collapse in Kep province that killed 36 people.

The Building and Wood Workers Trade Union and labor group Central held a press conference in Phnom Penh to make their appeal, saying child labor on building sites needed to end and developers must be held accountable for the quality of their constructions.

Six children were among the 36 who died after the seven-story building in Kep collapsed on Friday.

Sok Kin, president of the Building and Wood Workers Trade Union, said inspections needed to be tightened by both the Labor Ministry and Land Management Ministry.



*The Building and Wood Workers Trade Union and labor group Central held a press conference in Phnom Penh. CamboJA*

The Land Management Ministry’s building permits and site inspections needed to be tightened up, “to check the quality and standard so as to remove future risk,” he said.

The Labor Ministry, meanwhile, needed to ensure workers’ safety, Kin said. “Inspectors from the Labor Ministry need to go to the construction sites [and check] if workers have safety equipment, if the work is complying with the Labor Law and [there is no] child labor, and [inspect] living standards — whether those workers have accommodation, toilets and are not living on-site.”

The collapse in Kep followed another building collapse in Sihanoukville in June that killed 28 people and injured 26. Last month, an under-construction pagoda in Siem Reap collapse and killed three.

Central’s project coordinator, Khun Tharo, said accountability was key to preventing future tragedies.

“If the relevant authorities allow carelessness that causes people to die, and they don’t face punishment, it will happen again,” Tharo said.


The Kep building’s owners, Ek Sarun, 65, and his wife, Chhiv Sothy, 61, were arrested in the wake of the collapse and charged with manslaughter and causing involuntary bodily harm, but were released on bail on Monday.

Labor Ministry spokesman Heng Sour did not respond to requests for comment.

Sou Chhlohn, vice president of the Building and Wood Workers Trade Union, said at Wednesday's press conference that developers flouting permit requirements were a common thread between recent building collapses. "In Sihanoukville, the Land Management Ministry said the seven-story collapse didn't have a permit from authorities, and in Kep province they said the building was approved only for five stories but was built to seven stories."

"We don't want to see any more incidents for construction workers," Chhlohn said.

205 views

 Building collapsed, Kep City

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