



Cambodian officials close down Chinese-owned copper mine, arrest two workers

Publisher	Radio Free Asia
Publication Date	20 January 2016
Cite as	Radio Free Asia, <i>Cambodian officials close down Chinese-owned copper mine, arrest two workers</i> , 20 January 2016, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/56c31efc23.html [accessed 4 January 2024]
Disclaimer	This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

Search Refworld

by keyword
and / or country
Clear Search

Advanced Search | Search Tips

Countries

- Cambodia
- China

2016-01-20

Cambodian mining officials have temporarily shut down a Chinese copper-mining firm for operating in a northern province with expired government-issued licenses and arrested two of the firm's employees, local authorities said.

Siem Reap's provincial department of mines and energy closed down operations on Jan. 14 at the site run by Meng Xin Hong Fa (Cambodia) Resources Investment Co. Ltd. on more than 3,600 hectares (8,900 acres) of land in Chi Krong district, because its two licenses had expired in October 2014, officials said.

Machinery and trucks owned by Meng Xin Hong Fa (Cambodia) Resources Investment Co. Ltd. sit at a copper mining site in Chi Krong district in northern Cambodia's Siem Reap province, Jan. 20, 2016. RFA

Soeung Sen, head of the office in charge of combating economic crimes at Siem Reap's provincial police headquarters, told RFA's Khmer Service on Wednesday that the company had ramped up its mining activities during the last three years without renewing its operating licenses.

"Police have documented the shutdown of the operations and stopped [the company] from continuing production because it doesn't have a license from the Ministry of Mines and Energy," he said.

The company was ineligible under current law to conduct explorations in the area, he added.

When authorities raided the mining site last week, they arrested a Chinese manager and driver, and took them to the Siem Reap court to be questioned, he said.

The firm's Chinese owner, Nem Meng, however, fled to Vietnam, he added.

Keeping Watch

Pov Bunthoeun, governor of Chi Krong district, said he has assigned police officers to keep watch over the area in case operations are restarted.

"Now, we are implementing the order issued by the prosecutor, assigning local authorities to keep an eye [on the site]," he said.

Meng Xin Hong Fa had been excavating mines at the site for more than three years and transporting the copper to other places, he said.

The company began running the site after obtaining a license from Neb Meng Group in 2002 and expanded its operations to sites in the district's Khvav commune, he said.

Last December, authorities in Kampong Thom province seized two of the company's trucks as they were transporting more than 40 tons of copper to Phnom Penh, because they did not have a permission letter for transportation, *The Cambodia Daily* reported.

The current investigation was triggered after Kampong Thom's mines and energy department filed a complaint in the provincial court against Meng Xin Hong Fa, the report said.

Meng Saktheara, spokesman for the Ministry of Mines and Energy, said the government issued the company a license to operate within the 3,600-hectare land concession in 2012, but would not issue new ones because it broke the law by trying to transport copper to Phnom Penh for export to China, local media reported.

Under current law, operating a mine in Cambodia with an expired license carries a punishment of up to five years in prison, a fine of up to 10 million riel (U.S. \$2,500), and the confiscation of production equipment, according to local media.

Reported by Sobratsavyouth Hang for RFA's Khmer Service. Translated by Pagnawath Kuhn. Written in English by Roseanne Gerin.

[Link to original story on RFA website](#)

Copyright notice: Copyright © 2006, RFA. Reprinted with the permission of Radio Free Asia, 2025 M St. NW, Suite 300, Washington DC 20036.