

**IMPACTS OF DIGITAL  
RIGHT RESTRICTIONS  
ON PRESS FREEDOM AND  
FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION  
ON THE INTERNET**

# Table of Contents

- Executive Summary . . . . . 1**
- Abbreviations . . . . . 3**
- Introduction. . . . . 4**
  - Context . . . . . 4
  - Objective . . . . . 6
- Methodology . . . . . 7**
- Background on Cambodia’s Digital Landscape and Media Ecosystem . . . . . 8**
- Findings & Analysis. . . . . .13**
  - Demographics . . . . . 13
  - Current Practices and Future Needs . . . . . 19
  - Impacts of Internet Restriction on the Private Sector and Self-Censorship . . . . . 21
- Conclusion. . . . . .22**
- Recommendations . . . . . .23**
  - Recommendations to the Royal Government of Cambodia . . . . . 23
  - Recommendations to the private sector, ISPs, and social media operators . . . . . 25
  - Recommendations to professional journalists, CJs, HRDs, and CSOs that support them:. . . . . 26
  - Recommendations to donors . . . . . 27
- Appendices . . . . . .28**
  - Annex A: Survey Questionnaires . . . . . 28
  - Annex B: Focus Group Interview Questions with Civil Society Groups . . . . . 30
  - Annex C: Interview Questions with Private Sector & ISP . . . . . 31
  - Annex D: Interview questions with the Royal Government . . . . . 32
- Works Cited . . . . . .34**

# Executive Summary

This is a report that seeks to address both the impacts of digital rights restrictions on press freedom and freedom of expression on the internet in Cambodia, as well as the varying perceptions of independent journalists and citizens regarding the impacts and consequences of digital rights restrictions.

The report, titled “The Impacts of Digital Rights Restrictions on Press Freedom and Active Citizen’s Freedom of Expression on the Internet,” examines how limitations on digital rights affect press freedom and the online freedom of expression of citizens in Cambodia. The study includes the perspectives of independent journalists and citizens, comparing them with the views of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and the private sector. The study’s purpose is to enhance understanding and policy dialogue to promote digital rights.

Additionally, the report analyzes responses from independent journalists and active citizens in Cambodia regarding the study. It aims to assess their knowledge, practices, and perceptions of challenges while these with RGC and private sector views.

The survey results reveal widespread concerns about internet security and digital communication applications, leading to self-censorship, distrust of ISPs, online security worries, and fears that these issues may spill into real-life dangers for journalists and active citizens.

Furthermore, the report offers constructive recommendations for the private sector, ISPs, the RGC, journalists, and others to advance digital rights in Cambodia through multi-stakeholder policy dialogue and increased awareness.

The study utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods, incorporating surveys, interviews, and discussions to identify several conclusions.

While the internet has become a critical platform in Cambodia for media organizations and actors, it has also proven to be a tool of governmental oversight. On one hand, the internet facilitates activism and advocacy, particularly in human rights and democratization. On the other, while the government asserts their intentions to implement measures to enhance digital governance and combat cybercrime, the motives of these actions are up for debate, and the impacts remain a cause for concern. The internet and social media platforms, particularly Facebook, give access to information, but are also key pushers of misinformation and “fake news.” They also often serve as gateways of harassment and abuse towards journalists, amongst other groups. When journalists, or other members of society share news and express opinions, they often encounter these issues. Unfortunately, this can lead to self-censorship in the future and professional stress.

Many respondents expressed concern that these fears associated with internet usage could dissuade responsible citizenship and undermine good governance and civic engagement efforts. Survey respondents cited their belief that the government and internet service providers (ISPs) monitor journalistic expression and civic engagement attempts. A large portion of the respondents also believe that the government and ISPs monitor journalists and activist online, limiting their freedom of expression. Many also believe that the government controls online actions and free access to the internet using legal tools. With regards to the National Internet Gateway (NIG), which the government asserts is a tool for economic development, the majority of the respondents expressed skepticism towards the government’s claim. Nevertheless, most respondents agree that the internet can be used as tool to

learn from and understand a multitude of diverse points of view. Respondents believe restrictions on the internet discourage innovation and limit access to accurate information while simultaneously increasing personal safety and security threats. A non-negligible number of respondents feel that using the internet will lead to increased personal safety and security threats against journalists. A significant number of journalists expressed the belief that this would affect their ability to work as journalists who often deal with sensitive subject matter. Respondents worry about big data mining, malware attacks, and targeted surveillance.

The results show Telegram, Signal, and WhatsApp remain popular platforms for communication among journalists, many respondents still worry about the security of these platforms. Respondents also request more digital security training. Many negative impacts of internet limitations in Cambodia were observed, including reduced competition, slower internet speed, and increased costs. Cooperation between the private sector and journalists/NGOs was hindered by a lack of trust in ISPs and worries about the corporate sector's interactions with journalists/NGOs.

# Abbreviations

<b>CamboJA</b>	<b>Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association</b>
<b>CJ</b>	<b>Citizen Journalist</b>
<b>CSO</b>	<b>Civil Society Organizations</b>
<b>HRD</b>	<b>Human Rights Defender</b>
<b>INGO</b>	<b>International Non-Government Organization</b>
<b>NIG</b>	<b>National Internet Gateway</b>
<b>ODC</b>	<b>Open Development Cambodia</b>
<b>RGC</b>	<b>Royal Government of Cambodia</b>
<b>TRC</b>	<b>Telecommunication Regulator of Cambodia</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>ISP</b>	<b>Internet Service Provider</b>
<b>FFMP</b>	<b>Fundamental Freedoms Monitor Report</b>
<b>CCHR</b>	<b>The Cambodian Center for Human Rights</b>
<b>ADHOC</b>	<b>The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association</b>
<b>FGD</b>	<b>Focus Group Discussions</b>
<b>MSME</b>	<b>Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises</b>
<b>VOD</b>	<b>Voice of Democracy</b>

# Introduction

## Context

The internet has come to be a critical source of information in Cambodia. In 2016, the internet became the most popular channel for Cambodians to access information, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR)<sup>1</sup>. Beyond this already far-reaching impact, the internet's role in Cambodia is expanding rapidly, becoming indispensable for everyday tasks and the exchange of political ideas and opinions, particularly in the areas of human rights and democratization. However, the country's digital rights are still on shaky grounds. Digital rights encompass the fundamental freedoms that empower individuals to access, create, and share knowledge through digital platforms, nurturing connectivity with the global community and reinforcing the imperative of preserving freedom of expression on the internet. In recent years, digital rights in the country have been challenged via the censorship of selected web pages, removal of critical information, revoking of media licenses and various other means. This leaves Cambodians in a situation of controlled content online<sup>2</sup>.

According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), an international organization with the stated goal of protecting worldwide media freedom, Facebook stands as the primary online platform in the country, and a key source of information<sup>3</sup>. News is often disseminated through the Facebook algorithm, which typically prioritizes official and sponsored content<sup>4</sup>.

Also of note is the number of Cambodians with newfound access to the internet through smartphones. According to a report by Freedom House, Over the last five years, Cambodia has witnessed a surge in internet utilization and smartphone adoption. In January of 2021, the rate of internet penetration in Cambodia was 52.6%, marking a notable 14% increase in online users compared to the previous year<sup>5</sup>. Freedom House attributes this rise in penetration rates to the increasing usage of social media platforms, like Facebook<sup>6</sup>.

Following the sharp spike in internet use, the RGC has begun to impose restrictions on the online sector. This will have an undue impact on the country's media landscape, including journalists, as more and more citizens are online. It is crucial to highlight the significance of digital rights and freedom of expression on the internet in this context.

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<sup>1</sup> OHCHR, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. State of Press Freedom in Cambodia. Phnom Penh: United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner Cambodia, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> OHCHR, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. State of Press Freedom in Cambodia. Phnom Penh: United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner Cambodia, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> RSF, Reporters Without Borders. 2023 World Press Freedom Index. Paris: Reporters Without Borders (RSF), 2023.

<sup>4</sup> RSF, Reporters Without Borders. 2023 World Press Freedom Index. Paris: Reporters Without Borders (RSF), 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Freedom House. Freedom on the Net 2021 Cambodia <https://freedomhouse.org/country/cambodia/freedom-net/2021>

<sup>6</sup> Freedom House. Freedom on the Net 2021 Cambodia <https://freedomhouse.org/country/cambodia/freedom-net/2021>

The RGC is acclimatizing to the current times by the slow but steady creation of laws and draft laws aimed at curbing digital rights. These legislative efforts are in theory primarily to implement regulatory measures concerning Cambodia's cyberspace and related criminal activities. The initiatives are intended to provide judicial police and courts with the necessary authority to conduct investigations into such offenses. However, in practice, the survey reveals that many people feel these laws are meant to control actions on the internet, as opposed to their purported use as a tool of economic development.

According to the Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitor 2022 Annual Report (FFMP), commissioned by the The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR), The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC), and the Solidarity Center, Cambodian authorities continue to use legal procedures and criminal sanctions against citizens and journalists, fundamentally limiting their right to exercise freedom of expression online.

Compared to 2021, the percentage of restrictions on all forms of online expression decreased in 2022 to 45%. This indicates a significant reduction. Of the 58 cases that were recorded in the report, 34 of the cases were counted as a violation of online expression rights, while 24 of the cases were counted as restrictions of online expression rights. While the case count for 2022 is lower than 2021, the fact remains that internet freedom is still under threat in Cambodia. Citizens can face consequences as serious as arrest as a result of their online activity, this creates an environment defined by fear and self-censorship.<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, according to the FFMAP survey , the percentage of Cambodians that feel free to speak on social media decreased in 2022, falling from 47% in 2021 to 44% in 2022. Despite a slight increase in the previous years, the percentages overall remained low. The inability of people to speak freely on social media potentially reflects the general environment of fear and self-censorship that presides in the country.<sup>8</sup>

The result of the 2022 monitoring report also reveals a pattern of abuse of Cambodia's legal system. Laws are weaponized in a way that constricts civic expression rather than protects against cybercrimes and threats. Authorities use their power to intervene in private citizen and journalists' business, and target those who make politically sensitive or controversial claims. Members of controversial associations are targeted and judicially harassed .<sup>9</sup>

The events of 2022 and those leading up to the 2023 election show that the RGC has expanded their policing of online speech and media outlets. The RGC's interference with journalistic work puts citizens' right to freedom of expression at risk.

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<sup>7</sup> Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitor 2022 Annual Report, Open Development Cambodia, 2022

<sup>8</sup> Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitor 2022 Annual Report, Open Development Cambodia, 2022

<sup>9</sup> Cambodia Fundamental Freedoms Monitor 2022 Annual Report, Open Development Cambodia, 2022

## Objective

In response to these fears, CamboJA and ODC has commissioned the following report. The objective is to analyze the impact of the limitations put on digital rights and press freedom, especially with regards to the impact on freedom of expression of journalists and active citizens in the online realm.

The core research objective of the report is to understand and analyze the various viewpoints independent journalists and active online citizens have regarding the impact of digital rights restrictions on press freedom and online freedom of expression. The study takes into account the participants pre-existing knowledge of the issue, their current practices, and their perceptions and opinions. Then, those factors were compared with those of current private sector and RGC employees. This was done with the goal of providing stakeholders and relevant parties with a thorough understanding of the issue, as well as policy recommendations to improve Cambodia's digital rights situation.



# Methodology

The primary component of this study is a survey sent to and completed by independent journalists and active online citizens. The research team developed a set of key questions for the survey after reviewing media statements, analyzing policies and legislative frameworks, and conducting an extensive literature review. With these considerations in mind, the study adopted a hybrid methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure statistical rigor.

Ensuring the anonymity of the participants was a top priority, and the research team implemented de-identification protocols to protect their personal data. Respondent selection followed purposive sampling, drawing from the Digital Rights Working Group's research network and database. The research team ensured a comprehensive and balanced representation of gender, themes, and geographical locations while safeguarding participant anonymity.

The anonymous survey was sent to a selected group of 200 registered journalists across Cambodia. A total of 65 journalists participated in the study, constituting 32.5% of the target population. Among those who responded, 20.9% were women. The survey was sent via various messaging platforms, including WhatsApp, Signal, and Telegram.

Additionally, the research team also conducted a series of three semi-structured focus group discussions (FGDs). These FGDs involved 15 individuals known for their involvement in citizen journalism, environmental activism, and human rights advocacy.

In addition, 22 confidential key informant interviews were conducted, with specialists from diverse perspectives. Within the civil society sector, contributors had key roles as members of the Digital Rights Working Group led by civil society organizations, as well as independent experts specializing in digital security. Participants from the private sector also contributed valuable insight, including some from within an e-commerce platform, a digital start-up, a social network platform, an ISP, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Six individuals from the RGC were interviewed. Four of whom represented the RGC's regulatory and law enforcement agencies relevant to the research topic. The study also examined the various perspectives of CSOs, the RGC, and the commercial sector. Moreover, the primary expert interview expanded to encompass two prominent donors providing financial support to CSOs, the RGC, and the private sector. The primary expert interview encompassed two prominent donors providing financial support to CSOs, UN agencies, and the RGC.

An additional goal of the study was to verify the initial findings by engaging an additional group of 15 individuals engaged with public sector, private sector, CSOs, and other development works. This workshop served as an exclusive platform for participants and researchers to exchange existing knowledge and engage in discussions to reconcile varying viewpoints on the subject matter, with the hopes of coming to a resolution. These interactions influenced certain aspects of our qualitative analysis and subsequent recommendations.

This study's approach is distinguished by its rigorous methodology, designed to mitigate bias in the process, and uphold a high-quality standard in data collection and analysis. Furthermore, it seeks to derive practical recommendations using the experts' perspectives.

All participants were guaranteed confidentiality. The study was also designed to prioritize informed decision-making for participants with the support of reliable intermediaries. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any point, and their identities remained anonymous. All identities remained anonymous unless explicit prior written consent was granted.

# Background on Cambodia's Digital Landscape and Media Ecosystem

In recent years, Cambodia has seen a massive surge in internet penetration, in part due to the newfound prevalence of smartphones in everyday life and the popularity of social media, like Facebook. As previously stated, in January of 2021, the rate of internet penetration in Cambodia was 52.6%. This marks a 14% increase in online users compared to January of 2020. This level of significant growth among various telecommunications providers can be attributed to the increasing usage of online social media platforms. With the proliferation of access to the internet and a significant increase in social media usage in Cambodian society, these pathways have become key components in enabling political advocacy and activism, as well as the exchange of political ideas.

In light of these developments, the RGC has begun to adapt their legislative strategy towards restricting internet freedom, digital rights, and press freedom by drafting new cyber legislation. The Ministry of Interior is currently developing a new cybercrime law and the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications has drafted cybersecurity law.

In 2021, the RGC authorized the creation of the Sub-Decree on the establishment of the National Internet Gateway (NIG). The NIG is a government-controlled internet checkpoint that directs ISPs to route all internet traffic through central government checkpoints, facilitating government monitoring of all online activities and making it easier to block content and webpages. While the NIG will also block content that affects safety, and threats to social order, dignity, culture, and other areas, it nonetheless presents a threat to online freedom of expression and the free flow of information.<sup>10</sup>

While these measures are ostensibly meant to function in a protective manner against cybercriminals, they may end up emboldening police and courts to go after political opponents or critics with legislative threats.



Figure 1: Internet Subscriptions<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> CamboJA, Freedom of Expression Universal Periodic Review of Cambodia Submission

<sup>11</sup> The internet-subscriptions by TRC, available at <https://trc.gov.kh/en/internet-subscriptions/>

In January of 2023, Cambodia's total population stood at 16.86 million people. From 2022 to 2023, Cambodia witnessed a population increase of 174 thousand people, equivalent to a 1% rise. As of September 2022, the Telecommunication Regulator of Cambodia (TRC) reported 18 million internet users in the country, marking a decrease from the 20 million users recorded in 2020, likely attributed to factors such as the pandemic and lack of subscription renewals. According to Ookla's data, there is a projected steady growth in both mobile and fixed internet connection speeds, with mobile speeds increasing to 5.16 Mbps (a +45.5% growth) and fixed speeds reaching 2.39 Mbps (a +14.4% growth) by the end of 2022.<sup>12</sup>

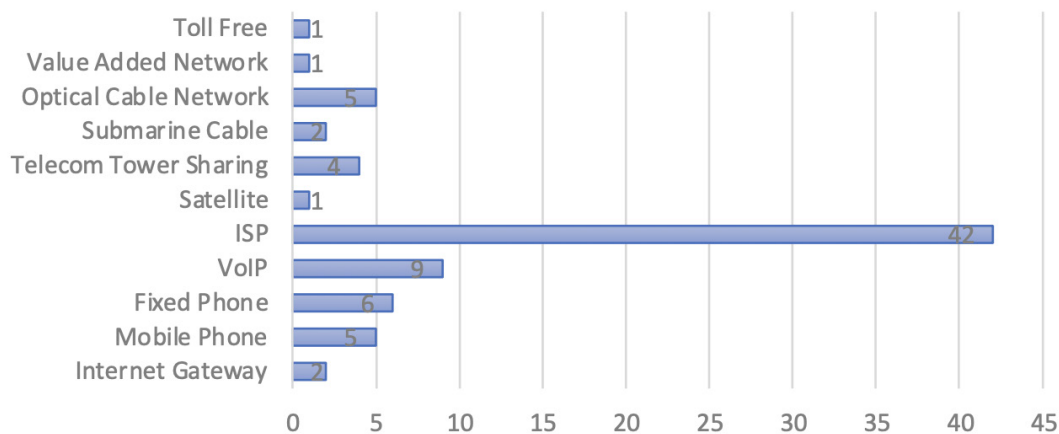


Figure 2: Licenses, source: TRC updated November 2022

Figure 2 is a representation of the different kinds of telecommunication methods in Cambodia. As depicted, the vast majority of people access the internet through ISPs, with the second most popular method being voice over internet protocol (VoIP), a technology that allows voice calls to be made over the internet, as opposed to phone lines. Nonetheless, VoIP only has a fraction of the popularity of ISPs. Currently, the number of telecommunications companies available in Cambodia is small, giving way to a highly concentrated market.

With regards to social media platforms, an analysis from DataPortal reveals that Facebook Messenger is the most popular platform in Cambodia, with 7.85 million users. Trailing Facebook Messenger in popularity are TikTok (6.68 million users), Instagram (2.05 million users), LinkedIn (460,000 users), and Twitter (220,600 users).<sup>13</sup>

On the 2023 World Press Freedom Index, a report by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) that calculates the degree of freedom available to journalists, Cambodia ranks 147 out of 180, falling five spots from its rank of 142 out of 180 in 2022 report (R. W. RSF).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Datareportal. Digital 2022: Cambodia. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-cambodia>

<sup>13</sup> Datareportal. Digital 2023: Cambodia, available at <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-cambodia>

<sup>14</sup> (Reporters Without Borders: Cambodia 2023, available at <https://rsf.org/en/country/cambodia>)

Journalistic independence in Cambodia is highly limited, and there is little diversity of media. Currently, there are only a few independent media outlets still operating in Cambodia, including CamboJA and VOA. Government press censorship, shutdowns of independent media outlets, and losses of editorial independence among newsrooms have caused significant changes to Cambodia's media landscape. For example, in March 2022, RSF reported on the revocation of licenses for three local news outlets due to their publication of investigative pieces aimed at uncovering potential corruption charges. In order to reinstate their license, the content of these articles had to be modified or removed.

There is a lack of diverse and independent sources of information and news in Cambodia. The remaining independent media organizations are often small, and lack the resources of larger organizations. While they do have the ability to report on more sensitive topics, the independent news media sphere also faces a crisis of sustainability, as the day-to-day threat of government shutdown is constant and very real.

While reporting on sensitive topics or topics with potential to be at odds with the RGC's policies and ideals, there is a pressure to stay quiet put on independent journalists and independent media organizations. This push against reporting can be both external and internal. Of course, outside actors can subtly or explicitly attempt to prevent reporting. However, independent journalists may also encounter an internal pressure to self-censor for fear of personal safety or the safety of their family and coworkers. Unfortunately, this limits the coverage of issues related to corruption or subjects of local political significance.

Consequently, several development partners and NGOs are attempting to provide support to the independent media sector in Cambodia. This is done through capacity development programs and various forms of technical assistance. The organizations often focus their efforts towards exposing these instances of abuse and harassment and providing recommendations to ameliorate the situation. In the absence of domestic options, these organizations that provide an alternative viewpoint are often the only way Cambodian independent journalists can effectively have their voices heard. As the independent media landscape grows rife with biased narratives and fake news, their role is more important than ever.

To be clear, independent journalists' concerns regarding monitoring by authorities is legitimate. Reporting on controversial topics, like land disputes and deforestation, still carries with it a massive risk. In many cases, independent journalist and local authorities share an antagonistic relationship, to which independent journalists get the short end of stick due to lack of institutional backing and legal power. However, despite these factors and oppositional cases, every year many journalists do still enjoy freedom of expression.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Reporters Without Borders online article published in March 28, 2022, <https://rsf.org/en/news/three-cambodian-news-sites-stripped-their-licence-publish>

The RGC is taking steps towards monitoring the digital landscape through its Digital Government Policy 2022-2035. The goal of this policy is to fast-track digital legislature in a manner that is fair and transparent, with the hopes of expediting major reforms. The overarching goal of this plan is to pinpoint emerging sources of economic growth capable of effectively addressing potential future disruptions and leveraging new economic opportunities to accelerate societal progress. There is a renewed focus on fostering trust and highlighting the significance of nurturing “digital citizens.” This emphasis is evident in one of the policy framework’s foundational tenants, the stated goal of “reliability and confidence in digital systems.”

Such regulatory frameworks, various policy measures, and effective digital security management are pivotal steps in both the stated goal of building trust and instilling confidence, but also mitigating adverse repercussions. Concerns have arisen among citizens, media, and civil society organizations advocating for journalists and active citizens due to the introduction of the NIG by the RGC, along with the drafting of the Cybercrime Law, Access to Information Law, and increased restrictions on civil society organization operations. These concerns include license revocation of media outlets and the prosecution of human rights defenders, environmental activists, and independent journalists. They are further aggravated by the current political environment, skepticism regarding the RGC’s intentions towards socio-economic development and digital rights, as well as the protection of the state and its citizens from cyber-crimes and online abuse.

The Freedom House Online Report (2020), created by Freedom House, a non-profit organization that monitors democracy, political freedom, and human rights around the world, upholds the data showing the internet has become a major channel people in Cambodia use for news and information consumption. It also revealed the rise of social media platforms has further enabled the sharing of content that is out of the control of the government and lacks tampering from authorities.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the main ways Cambodians get their news is through Facebook, Radio Free Asia (RFA), Voice of America (VOA), Voice of Democracy (VOD), and CamboJA News. Independent news outlets, such as the now-defunct Southeast Asia Globe and ASEAN Today, also operate within Cambodia. On Facebook, Radio Free Asia’s Khmer-language Facebook page has over 6 million followers and VOA has over 7 million followers, making those two one of the most visited pages on Facebook in Cambodia. The site Fresh News has over three million followers. However, the crisis of the independent media outlet sphere’s sustainability persists, as more outlets are threatened with shutdown. This leads to self-censorship by journalists, reduces the number of viewpoints presented in the news, a loss of editorial independence, and threatens the media ecosystem’s future. Few to none new independent news outlets open, and more are shut down every year. Cambodia’s online media landscape is now dominated a small group of government-connected individuals, limiting political views expressed in the media to a generally pro-government stance. This also places constraints on independent journalists and their ability to accurately report the news.

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<sup>16</sup> Freedom on the Internet; Cambodia, Freedom House Online Report, available at <https://freedomhouse.org/country/cambodia/freedom-net/2020>

Tools like the internet, social media platforms, and various other digital communication methods have massively increased the visibility of key information to the average Cambodian and has given them a new way of organizing and sharing political speech and expression. This increase in freedoms also brings with it the risk of the proliferation of fake news, misinformation, disinformation, cybercrimes, online abuse, and other objectionable dynamics. Concerns over fake news, disinformation, and misinformation are especially relevant with regards to social media platforms. Undeniably, this has an unfavorable effect on digital security, privacy, and comfort of the digital sphere in general. Independent journalists and independent media outlets are particularly affected by the adverse impacts of digital technologies, as threats to freedom of expression impose an undue burden on them in comparison to an average citizen. There's a broader concern that this prevailing pattern may set an unfavorable precedent for Cambodia's younger generation, potentially discouraging them from embracing responsible citizenship. Additionally, it could weaken the RGC's efforts to promote good governance and civic engagement.

# Findings & Analysis

## Demographics

In the comprehensive analysis of survey data, understanding the demographics of respondents is a key step. The demographic information presented and analyzed in this section provides essential context and insight into the characteristics of the individuals who participated in the survey. Examining demographic factors such as age, gender, location, experience, and more, provides a deeper understanding of the diversity within our respondent pool. This information facilitates assessments of how various groups perceive internet freedom in Cambodia. Moreover, it allows the Identification of potential patterns, trends, or variations in responses based on demographic variables. Analyzing respondent's demographics also facilitates meaningful conclusions and tailored recommendations that are both informed and relevant.

Respondent's Gender

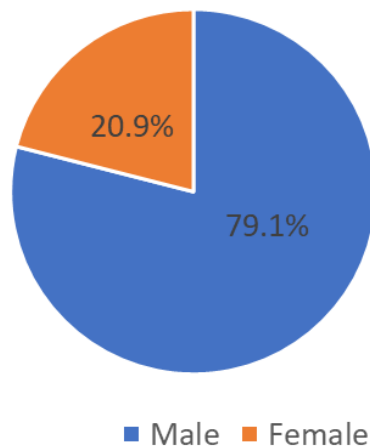


Figure 3: Respondents' Gender

20.9% of survey participants identified as female, while 79.1% of participants identified a male.

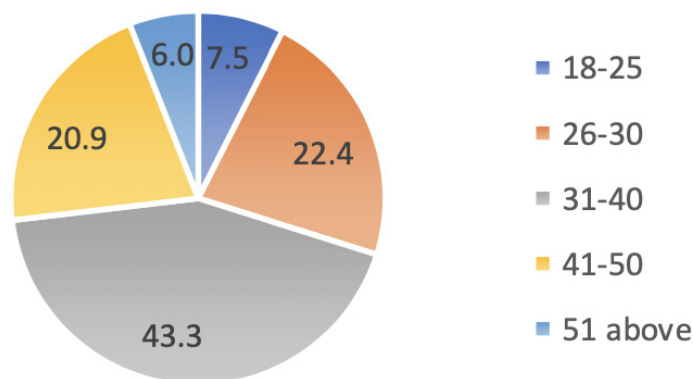


Figure 4: Respondents' Age

The majority of respondents were aged 31- 40 (43.3%). The next two most populous age groups were 26-30 (22.4%) and 41-50 (20.9%). The age groups with the lowest numbers of participants were 18-25 (7.5%) and 51+ (6%). According to UNICEF, Cambodia has a very young population. However, despite the fact that approximately 60% of Cambodia's population is under 25, given the nature of the profession, and particularly of journalism within Cambodia, it is understandable that the 18-25 category had one of the lowest measured number of respondents.

### Respondents' Professional Experience

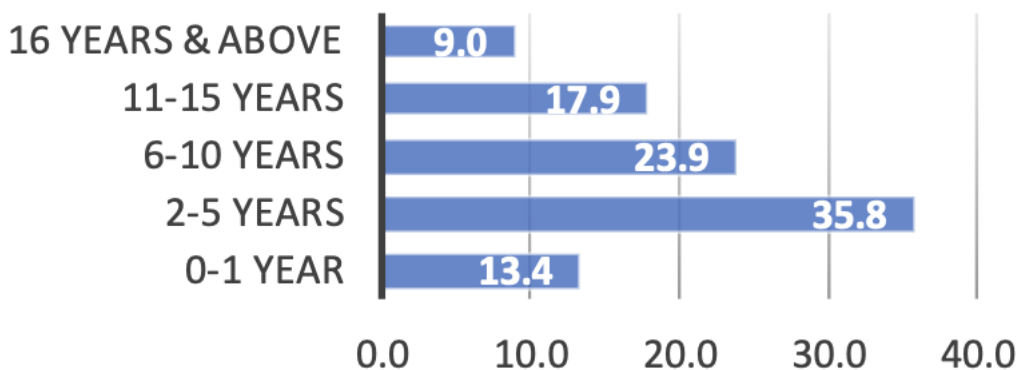


Figure 5: Years of professional experience

The majority of survey respondents are relative newcomers to reporting, having been working as a journalist for 2-5 years (35.8%), while only 9% of respondents have 16 or more years of experience. A notable portion of participants (23.9%) reported 6-10 years of experience, followed by 11-15 years of experience (17.9%), meaning nearly 42% of respondents had at least six years of experience. Lastly, 13.4% had 0-1 years of experience. This reveals an encouraging trend of newcomers entering the profession in recent years.

### Respondent's Work Locations



Figure 6: Respondents' Work Locations



In most cases (67.68%), respondents reported their work location to be Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. As shown on the bar in orange representing “Primary Work Location,” a further 21.22% of respondents stated their work location to be both Phnom Penh and other locations, including Siem Reap, Otdar Meanchey, Kampong Speu, and Battambang. The remaining 11.9% of respondents reported working out of only one of the previously listed locations. While it is promising that Phnom Penh, the country’s most populous city, is host to so many journalists, the lack of journalists working in the rest of the country is not ideal.

### Types of Media

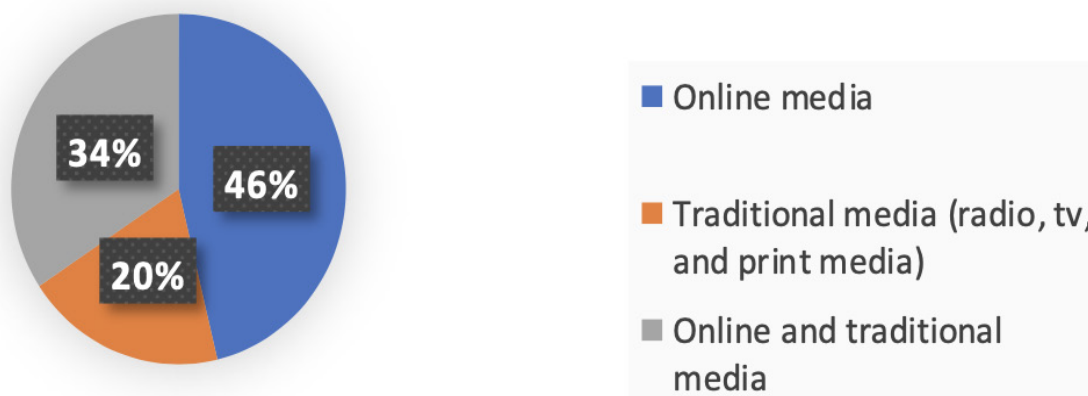


Figure 7: Types of media

The above graph reports the type of media the journalist respondent is working for. A significant majority, comprising 80.6% of the respondents, have affiliations with media organizations that disseminated their work through online platforms. Within that group, 46.3% of respondents were exclusively affiliated with online media organizations, while 34.3% of respondents were affiliated with both online and traditional media. The remaining 19.4% were exclusively affiliated with traditional media outlets. In this survey, “traditional media” was defined as print media, television, and radio.

## Perception and Awareness of Internet Freedom in Cambodia

Q. To what extent would you rate the level of internet freedom in cambodia?

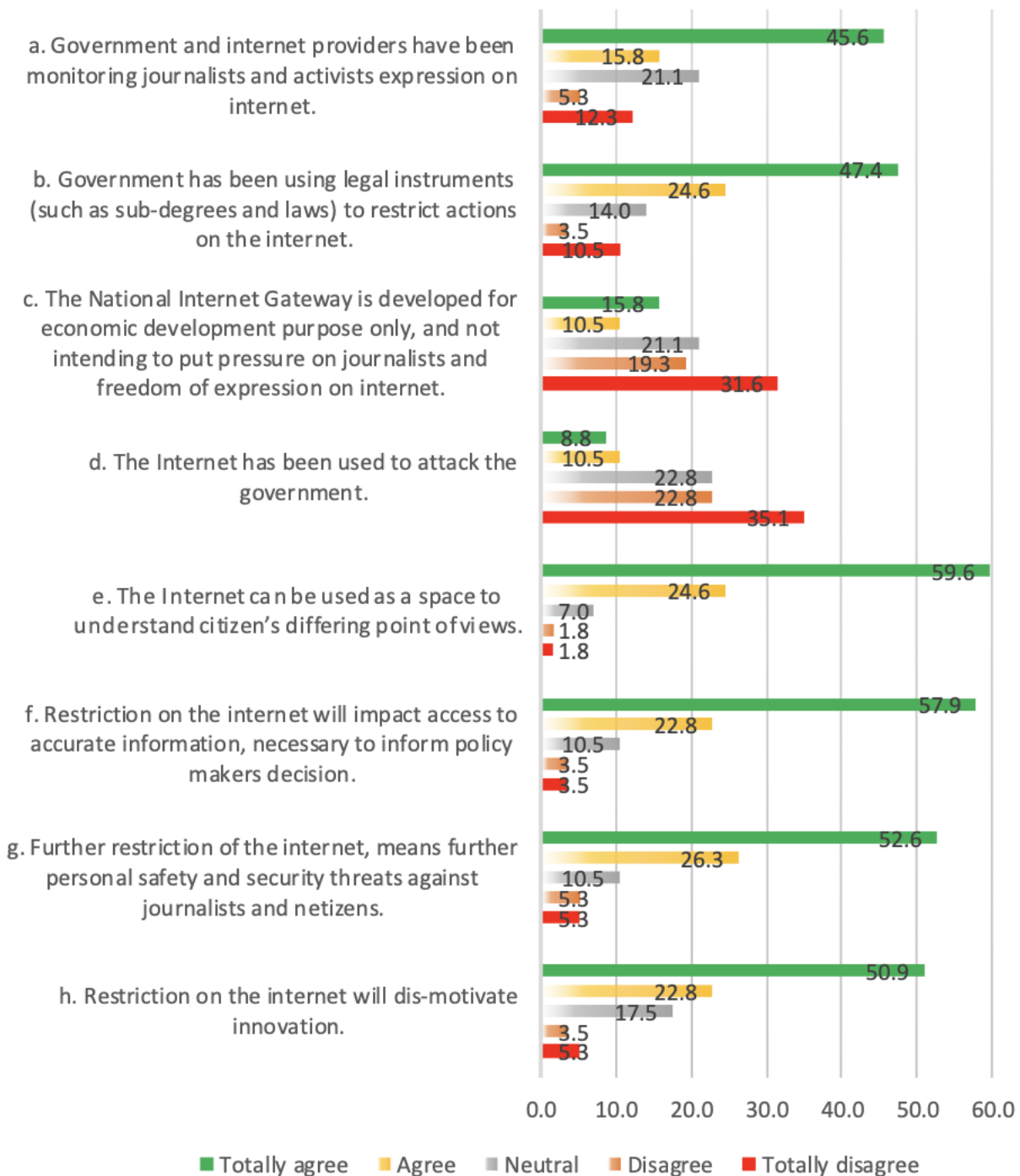


Figure 8: Perception on the internet freedom in Cambodia

To gauge the perception and awareness of internet freedom in Cambodia respondents were first asked to rate their perception of the level of internet freedom in Cambodia on a scale of 1 to 5, with an answer of 1 representing “totally restricted,” 2 representing “somehow restricted,” 3 representing “somehow free,” and 4 representing “totally free.” A response of 5 represented “I don’t know.”

In the second question, respondents were then asked to answer the next section by indicating their agreement or disagreement with provided statements. They answered with a number on a scale of 1 to 5 that corresponded with their agreement or disagreement, with 1 representing “totally disagree” and 5 representing “totally in agreement.”

As seen in the graph above, nearly half of the respondents answered “totally agree” to statements regarding the government taking action to monitor freedom of expression (45.6%) and suspicion of the use of legal tools to restrict journalists’ actions online (47.4%). An additional 15.8% and 24.6% of respondents, respectively, answered with a 4 on both questions. This indicates a high level of suspicion towards the government and represents journalists’ fears regarding limitations of freedom of expression online.

Statement C questions the true intentions of the NIG, with 31.6% of respondents answering with a 5, indicating their disbelief regarding its purpose as a tool of economic development. Disagreement with the statement also indicates respondents’ belief that it may have been used to put pressure on journalists and freedom of expression on the internet. An additional 19.3% answered this question with a 4, showing further doubt.

Furthermore, 57.9% of respondents answered negatively to statement F, which asked whether respondents thought the internet is used as a weapon against the government.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (59.6%) answered “totally agree” to Statement E, which highlighted the internet as an area of free-thought and key in the dissemination of different points of view and opinions. A further 24.6% of respondents answered with a 4, resulting in 84.2% of respondents responding positively to the question.

Statements F, G, and H measured respondents’ perceptions about the impact that internet restrictions may have on Cambodia. In all cases, over half of respondents answered with a 1 (“totally agree”) to statements indicating that further internet restrictions would result in negative consequences for access to information, journalists’ safety, innovation, and policy-making.

While a substantial 80.7% of respondents contended that internet restrictions will negatively impact policymakers access to accurate information, and 73.7% of the participants express the belief that internet restrictions will deter innovation, an even larger proportion, 78.9%, maintain the viewpoint that additional internet restrictions will lead to heightened threats to the personal safety and security of journalists and netizens.

## Perceived Level of Safety and Security When Using the Internet

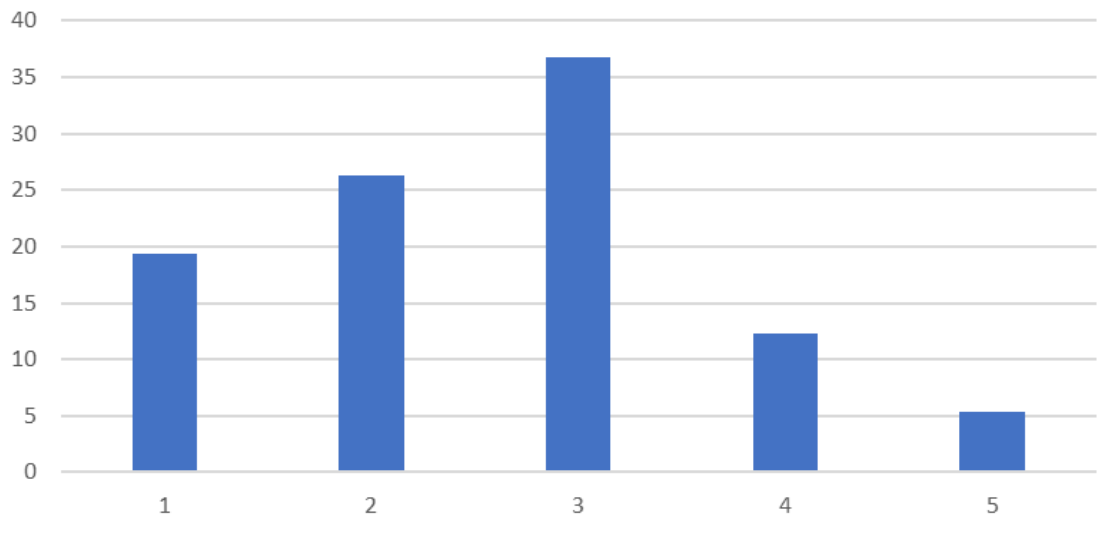


Figure 9: The level of safety and security when you are using the internet

The third question examined respondents' perceptions of safety and security on the internet. This was also indicated on a scale of 1 to 5, with an answer of 1 indicating "not safe at all" and 5 indicating "totally safe."

Answers to the third question reveal 26.3% of respondents marked "2," indicating a belief that using the internet is not safe to and 19.3% marked "1" indicating their belief that using the internet to do sensitive work is "not safe at all." Therefore, 45.6% of respondents, nearly half, believed that the internet is unsafe. An additional 29.9% of respondents said that they are unable to deliver sensitive work as journalists when asked by the survey. In the focus group discussions, respondents expressed concerns over big data mining without consent, malware attacks, service and network sabotage, and targeted surveillance of their digital tools and communication platforms.

## Current Practices and Future Needs

This section gauges the current use practices of journalists and active online citizens in Cambodia, including their most used platforms, awareness and experience with digital security trainings, and their thoughts on potential future digital security training topics.

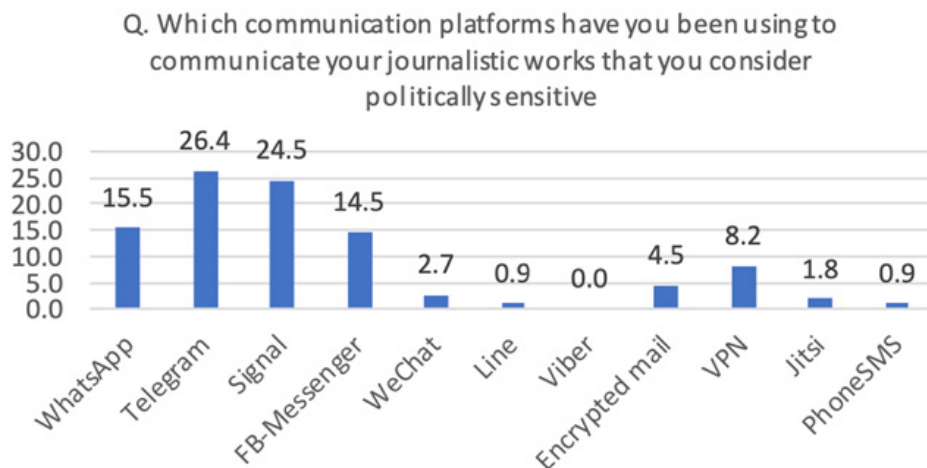


Figure 10: Communication platform used to communicate issues considered private or sensitive

The results show that Telegram (26.4%) and Signal (24.5%) are the most popular communication platforms respondents use when transmitting politically sensitive work, constituting over half of the responses. Making up the other half is WhatsApp (15.5%), Facebook Messenger (14.5%), and WeChat (2.7%). Only 8.2% of respondents reported using a VPN, and only 4.5% used an encrypted email. This shows that the vast majority of journalists do not use secure networks when sending politically sensitive information.

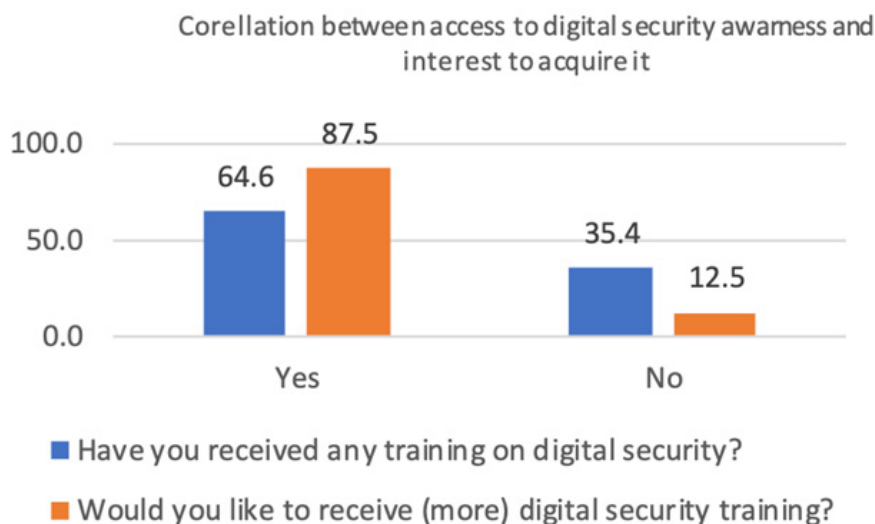


Figure 11: Experience and interest about training on digital security

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64.6%) had received training on digital security, and a significant majority (87.5%) would like to receive more digital security training in the future.



Figure 12: Topics for the future training/capacity building

When asked about potential topics for future training and capacity building sessions, the most popular topics in descending order are “How to stay safe using digital tools for journalism” (21.1%), “How to use social media and other online broadcasting more effectively” (14%), “Freedom of speech, how to preserve digital rights and internet freedom” (12.3%), and “Concept of Digital Privacy” (12.3%).

# Impacts of Internet Restriction on the Private Sector and Self-Censorship

The information presented in this section was collected from focus group discussions with members of CSOs, ISPs, the employees of the RGC, and the private sector.

According to information collected from the focus group discussions, internet restrictions have a negative effect on both the private sector and self-censorship, most commonly seen in limitations to freedom of expression. Many respondents also expressed concern over understanding the RGC's goals, capabilities, and potential growing costs. These challenges arise due to factors like the suggested 12-month extension of data storage, limited competition, diminished internet speed, and the potential for an increase in rent-seeking activities.

Additionally, data garnered from the interviews revealed that the private sector is wary of working with journalists and NGOs for fear of their perceived "extreme beliefs." Fears of possible reprisals and the revocation of corporate licenses deter private sector entities from openly voicing their apprehensions regarding the NIG.

Also revealed in the interviews is a prevailing concern surrounding the optimal approach to addressing consumer issues and the increasing erosion of trust in service providers, particularly within the realm of internet service providers. This concern is amplified by the fact that the sole distributor of optical cables may also possess data access capabilities. Ultimately, these restrictions are poised to burden consumers with greater costs, potentially impacting the affordability for rural residents and impeding the growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). It could significantly hinder the operations of small businesses, if allowed to run a worst-case scenario course. Doubts have arisen regarding the government's ability to fully grasp the diverse requirements of the private sector, prompting questions about the relevance of consultation sessions hosted by these governmental bodies.

# Conclusion

Through surveying respondents on their perceptions of internet freedom and conducting focus group discussions, the research team was able to highlight the complex concerns surrounding internet usage and restrictions in Cambodia. While the internet has become an integral part of life in Cambodia with regards to facilitating communication, information dissemination, and sharing diverse points of view, legitimate concerns are also cropping up regarding the growth in internet usage and government monitoring.

One such concern is the perceived lack of internet freedom, with the surveillance of journalists and activists by both the government and ISPs. The majority of respondents expressed apprehension about the government's use of legal tools to curtail internet activity, and the potential negative implications of the National Internet Gateway on freedom of expression on the internet.

Furthermore, the findings shed light on a dichotomy in perceptions. While most respondents acknowledge the internet's potential as a platform for understanding different perspectives, they also underscore how the current limitations to the internet impede innovation and restrict access to key information needed by both everyday citizens and policy-makers. They expressed fear of escalating personal safety and security threats stemming from online activities, influencing their comfort levels and perhaps leading to self-censorship, particularly when it comes to disseminating politically sensitive information.

Additional digital security concerns include big data mining, malware attacks, and government surveillance. While most respondents already had a level of digital security training, the majority would like to receive more comprehensive training. The popularity of communication platforms like Telegram, Signal, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and WeChat and few cases of the use of VPNs and encrypted email among journalists handling politically sensitive material emphasizes the importance of the use secure networks and promoting these trainings.

The study also revealed a profound lack of trust in ISPs and a scarcity of competition in the internet service sector. Many in the private sector are reluctant to work with journalists and NGOs for fear of their perceived radical opinions and potential repercussions.

The research shines a light on the critical need for a balanced approach to internet regulation in Cambodia. Such approach should safeguard all citizen's digital security and promote innovation, while respecting freedom of expression and avoiding monitoring and censorship. It is crucial that both the government and ISPs work collaboratively to address these concerns and foster an environment where the internet serves as a safe and accessible platform for communication, information sharing, and socio-economic progress.



# Recommendations

Part of the focus group discussion was collecting recommendations from each group for the others. CSO members were asked to provide recommendations for the RGC, private sector, and ISPs. The private sector, ISPs, and the RGC were all asked to provide recommendations for journalists, citizen journalists, and the agencies that support them. The list below details the recommendations to address the issues for 1) the RGC, 2) the private sector, ISPs, and social media operators, 3) professional journalists, citizen journalists, HRDs, and the CSOs that support them, and 4) donors.

## Recommendations to the Royal Government of Cambodia

1. The government and relevant authorities should promote press freedom and respect for journalists' professional obligations, such as the privacy of sources of information, including a commitment to ending online harassment of journalists.
2. The private sector thinks that the government should have a specific mechanism to inspect and safeguard the secrecy of data detained by the private sector. Additionally, enact personal data protection laws for all.
3. RGC should directly discuss with CSOs, ISPs, big data companies, and all types of private actors impacted by the NIG to understand their needs, perceptions, and concerns. There should be industry-focused and public consultation. The government should take input from the public and private sectors.
4. Level the playing field among operators and service providers and reduce administrative costs and fees.
5. Take measures to reduce the barriers to internet access, such as cost, by developing cheaper internet access packages and selling low-cost devices to make internet access affordable to most citizens, especially the poor, and sustain these affordable offerings.
6. To dispel any misunderstandings that the general public might have, proactively provide reliable and factual information.
7. Establish an independent broadcasting authority.
8. Educate and engage the public about how to discern fake news online and how to fact-check, as opposed to using broad and vague criminal laws against the public as the only solution; create legislature that enshrines the right to information in law.
9. Respect and promote the role of the media and journalists as a critical source of information and engagement for the public.

10. Stop targeting government critics, journalists, CJs, HRDs, and social media users through arrests, threats, and various forms of harassment and intimidation.
  - Drop pending charges against journalists and HRDs, and investigate cases of violence against journalists and HRDs.
  - Amend the Penal Code, law on associations and non-governmental organizations, and telecommunications law, in order to bring them into conformity with international human rights law and standards.
  - Implement programs to promote digital inclusion for marginalized and underserved groups, communities, and areas. Ensure that media, information and digital literacy are accessible by everyone, especially children, by providing training and integrating the subjects into school curriculum.
11. Establish legal and policy measures that ensure accountability and transparency in data collection, storage, and processing. Put in place mechanisms to ensure personal data is secured and not misused by unscrupulous individuals to violate human rights.
12. Create and lead a tri-sector policy dialogue on digital rights and inclusion and ensure meaningful participation from all.
13. Cambodia is among the few countries not benefiting from Google's and Microsoft's charitable donations. RGC should engage with them.
14. Establish legal and policy measures that protect digital rights, and repeal or revise laws and regulations imposing restrictions on digital rights.
15. Include active citizens in the lawmaking process, so a wider range of input is taken into legislative consideration.
16. Create a non-partisan authority to oversee digital rights legislature and online surveillance measures created by law enforcement and government agencies and ensure they are working within international human rights guidelines regarding digital rights, like the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
17. Repeal Prakas of the Ministry of Information, which authorizes the government to revoke media licenses without judicial processes, violating press freedom principles and article 41 of Cambodian constitutional law.
18. Guarantee the rights and freedom to access information on the internet and freedom of expression on the internet by repealing Lèse-majesté laws, revoking sub-decree on the Establishment of National Internet Gateway (NIG), Sub-decree 287 on National Domain Name .kh, inter-ministerial decree No. 170 on "publication controls of websites and social media processing via the internet," by promoting the principles of net neutrality, the removal of firewalls, and ISP censorship.

# Recommendations to the private sector, ISPs, and social media operators

1. Be transparent and accountable to users and comply with the laws and regulations of the country that are in accordance with Cambodia's constitution and international treaties adopted by Cambodia.
2. Create local content and tailor-made trainings on digital security.
3. Improve services, reduce costs, and adopt a social agenda.
4. Support local businesses and vulnerable groups with affordable access, protection from online abuse, and protection from surveillance.
5. Donate licensed software and equipment to social workers at subnational levels.
6. Assist the RGC and CSOs in understanding challenges and opportunities to collaborate and offer leadership in multi-stakeholder dialogue.

## Recommendations to professional journalists, CJs, HRDs, and CSOs that support them:

1. Ensure impartiality and professionalism and engage with the RGC and private sectors in good faith.
2. They should adhere to ethical standards, accountability, and transparency. 'It is dangerous that anyone with a mobile phone can livestream any conflicts. They can put innocent people in harm's way and cripple the authorities in the process of doing their jobs.'
3. The government, or private sector, is not monolithic. Find your allies and work with them on common issues like the internet and press freedom.
4. Invest in licensed software and equipment (donors and managing contractors should make generous allowances for this).
5. All new agencies in Cambodia filter content to suit their priorities and limited spaces. Thus, grass-roots issues reported by trained citizen journalists are not always investigated or broadcast. It is imperative for CSOs to truly support the CJs by investing in a truly CJ-run digital platform that would allow trained CJs to surface all granular news and issues at the grassroots level on a daily basis. This news should be labelled as primary data, and competent authorities and professional journalists should further investigate it. CSOs and the government can collaborate and develop short and engaging digital training contents to recruit more CJs at large.
6. To engage with big data conglomerates, all CSOs need to come together under one digital rights and inclusion platform. In unifying voice, they can engage directly with big data or through global INGO platforms rallying for fairer and more transparent practices across the globe to get themselves heard on Cambodia's issues.
7. CSOs and governments can collaborate and develop short and engaging digital training by focusing on: (1) how to use digital tools for journalism safely (with all security applications and suggestions); (2) how to effectively use social media and online broadcasting tools; (3) how to preserve digital rights and internet freedom; (4) digital privacy; and (5) advanced digital security for journalists.

## Recommendations to donors

1. Engage with the RGC, private sector, and CSO to raise awareness of all international best practices on freedom of expression.
2. Support the project to build up the capacity of CJs on data privacy and self-upgraded professionalism.
3. Ensure impartiality and professionalism and engage with the government and private sector in good faith.
4. The government, or private sector, is not monolithic. Find your allies and work with them on common issues like the internet and press freedom.
5. Invest in licensed software and equipment (donors and managing contractors should make generous allowances for this).
6. Support CSOs to unify voices. To engage with big data conglomerates, all CSOs need to come together under one digital rights and inclusion platform. In unifying voice, they can engage directly with big data or through global INGO platforms rallying for fairer and more transparent practices across the globe to get themselves heard on Cambodia's issues.

# Appendices

## Annex A: Survey Questionnaires

This survey was rolled out targeting 200 active professional journalists registered in Cambodia.

Anonymous Study on Journalist Freedom of Expression on Internet

Chum Reap Sour Brothers and Sisters!

We are an independent research team from Saddhā , Cambodia's Strategy and Policy Consulting Enterprise. Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA) and Open Development Cambodia (ODC) have jointly commissioned a focus study seeking to understand your perception of press and internet freedom, how it impacts your works, and how you overcome those perceived challenges. Your contribution will inform CamboJA-ODC's programme strategy development. This survey is designed for all active Cambodian journalists operating in Cambodia. It is estimated that there are about 200 active journalist champions like you working for a range of press agencies and as independent journalists.

This survey is anonymous. Neither our research team at Saddha nor CamboJA-ODC leadership will have access to individual response to each question. Our research team will only receive the overall analysis that is a consolidation of all respondents' inputs via SurveyMoney. It is designed to ensure your complete privacy.

**Please kindly take 20 minutes to support this research.**

### QUESTIONNAIRES

Section 1. About respondents

1. Please indicate your age.

(18-25Yo, 26-30Yo, 31-40Yo, 41-50Yo, 51 and above)

2. Please indicate your gender.

(Male; Female; LGBTQI+; Prefer not to say)

3. How long have you been working as journalists in Cambodia?

(1.1year; 2-5 year; 6-10 years, 11-15years; above 16 years)

4. What type of media have you been working for?

Tick all applied: online media; traditional media (radio, tv, and print media); others:

please specify.

5. Where are you located?

Phnom Penh; Province (please name the province/s); Both Phnom Penh and provinces)

## Section 2. About perception and awareness

1. To what extent would you rate the level of internet freedom in Cambodia?

(1-5 rating: Totally restricted; Somehow restricted; Somehow free; Totally free; I don't know)

2. To what extent would you agree with the statements below?

(1-5 rating, with one being the totally disagree and 5 totally in agreement)

a. Government and internet providers have been monitoring journalists and activists expression on internet.

(1-5 rating, with one being the totally disagree and 5 totally in agreement)

b. Government has been using legal instruments (such as sub-degrees and laws) to restrict actions on the internet.

(1-5 rating, with one being the totally disagree and 5 totally in agreement)

c. The National Internet Gateway is developed for economic development purpose only, and not intending to put pressure on journalists and freedom of expression on internet. (1-5 rating, with one being the totally disagree and 5 totally in agreement)

d. The Internet has been used to attack the government.

(1-5 rating, with one being the totally disagree and 5 totally in agreement)

e. The Internet can be used as a space to understand citizen's differing point of views.

(1-5 rating, with one being the totally disagree and 5 totally in agreement)

f. Restriction on the internet will impact access to accurate information, necessary to inform policy makers decision.

(1-5 rating, with one being the totally disagree and 5 totally in agreement)

g. Further restriction of the internet, means further personal safety and security threats against journalists and netizens.

(1-5 rating, with one being the totally disagree and 5 totally in agreement)

h. Restriction on the internet will dis-motivate innovation.

(1-5 rating, with one being the totally disagree and 5 totally in agreement)

3. How would you rate the level of safety and security when you are using the internet? (1: not safe at all, to 5: totally safe)

a) Despite perceived or experienced impacts, to what extent do you feel that you are able to deliver your sensitive works as journalists on the internet?

(rank 1-5)

4. How would you predict the future (let say in the next 5 years) of internet freedom and freedom of expression on the internet?

Please write: (leave space for people to write their opinion)

### Section 3. About Practices and Needs

1. Which communication platform have you been using to communicate issues considered private or sensitive?

Please choose up to 3. (WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, FB-Messenger, WeChat, Line, Viber, Encrypted mail, VPN, Jitsi, others: please indicate)

2. Have you received any training on digital security?

3. What are the aspects of digital rights topics you would like to discuss?

4. What are the digital skills that you need to tackle your perceived problems in the digital rights atmosphere?

5. What are your recommendations to the Royal Government's relevant ministries?

6. What are your recommendations to the private internet providers and social media operators?

You have completed your input in this research – well done!

Thank you for your invaluable time. If you would like to receive a copy of this research publication, please contact Ms. Im Naren at CamboJA via [naren.im@camboja.net](mailto:naren.im@camboja.net).

## Annex B: Focus Group Interview Questions with Civil Society Groups

### Guideline for Focus Group Discussions

We will be exploring this topic through safe spaces and in-depth interviews with 3 semi-structured focus group discussions. We adopt purposive samplings of 15 active members of the press, citizen journalists and human rights/environmental rights defenders, and at least 50% of them are women. Use of this method aimed at diving deeper into issues affecting them and exploring how to address them on individual, organisational as well as policy level.

### INTRODUCTION

- Names and roles of researchers, facilitators and participants.
- The objective of the discussion is to seek participants' invaluable experiences and active engagement.



- Each FGD will last about 90 minutes.
- If permitted, interviews will be recorded for report writing purposes only. If directly quoted for publication purpose, prior written consent will be secured on a quote by quote basis.
- We seek to understand your perceptions and experience. There is no right or wrong answer; we encourage differing points of view. There is no need to answer all the questions and we encourage additional questions if relevant.

## **DISCUSSION**

1. What is your main profession and area of your responsibility?
2. How much of your daily work is done through the internet? What do you think about internet security in Cambodia, and your personal safety?
3. Do you feel you can freely express your opinion on the internet? Why do you feel that way?
4. Have you personally experienced any forms restrictions on the internet and how? Are you aware of any case related to restriction of professionals or netizens on freedom of expression on the internet?
5. Have you experienced any forms of threats as results of your expression on internet? How have the threats appeared to you? How have such threats impacted your work?
6. Do/Does you/your organisation use an online security protocol? Are there any specific security measures you have adopted (such as passwords, 2-factor authentication, email encryption, mobile apps, self-verification etc)?
7. Do you think you/your organisation have been under some forms of online surveillance? If yes, how does such surveillance affect your work? Who do you think is behind such surveillance and why?
8. On an individual level, how would you assess your knowledge and skills on information security?
9. Have you attended any online security training? What are the sources of useful security advice you have benefited from?
10. What are the online security aspects you would like to learn from?
11. There are many discussions about complete surveillance of the internet with the introduction of the Sub Decree on National Internet Gateway. Do you think it is the intention of the government? If no, what do you see as consequences of complete internet control by the government? If yes, what are the benefits of the NIG legislation?
12. Do you have any recommendations for the RGC?
13. Do you have any recommendations for the private sector and internet service providers?

## Annex C: Interview Questions with Private Sector & ISP

1. Does your organisation use an online security protocol? Are there any specific security measures you have adopted (such as passwords, 2-factor authentication, email encryption, mobile apps, self-verification etc)?
2. Do you think your organisation have been under some forms of online surveillance? If yes, how does such surveillance affect your work? Who do you think is behind such surveillance and why?
3. There are many discussions about complete surveillance of the internet with the introduction of the Sub Decree on National Internet Gateway. Do you think it is the intention of the Royal Government? If NO, what do you see as consequences of complete internet control by the government? If yes, what are the benefits of the NIG legislation?
4. As an ISP/ social media platform provider, what do you see as benefits and/or challenges from the NIG? why?
5. There are some concerns about ISPs and social media platform being under pressure to handing over their private data to the government under the new legislation, and/or are forced to help the government monitor dissents and ordinary citizens. Are these concerns valid from your experience?
6. In your opinion, what can you as ISPs/Social Media platform operators do to address journalists' and citizen's perceived concerns over ISP/Social Media involvement in surveillance and censorship?
7. In your opinion, how should the Royal Government go about securing increased buy-ins from private sector operators for the introduction of new digital infrastructure and regulations?
8. How does your organisation contribute to promote freedom of expression on the internet?
9. Do you have any recommendations for journalists and citizen journalists as well as the agencies that support them?

## Annex D: Interview questions with the Royal Government

### Key Experts Confidential Interview Guideline

We will be exploring this topic through in-depth interviews with 13 key experts and representatives of CSOs, government and private institutions, including one chamber of commerce, four regulatory and law enforcement agencies, one digital start-up company, one social media platform, one media outlet, one representative of CSO-led Digital Rights Working Group, one independent digital security expert, one development partner, and two UN agencies. Their opinions matter as we seek to understand their recognition of human rights and freedom of expression on the internet and their roles to promote internet and press freedom. Key experts will be interviewed with purposive sampling techniques as outlined above and following below semi-structured interview guideline.

## **INTRODUCTION**

- Names and roles of researchers and key experts.
- The objective of the discussion is to seek participants' invaluable experiences and active engagement.
- Key Expert Interview will be capped at 60minutes.
- If permitted, interviews will be recorded for report writing purposes only. If directly quoted for publication purpose, prior written consent will be secured on a quote by quote basis.
- We seek to understand your perceptions and experience. There is no right or wrong answer; we encourage differing points of view. There is no need to answer all the questions and we encourage additional questions if relevant.

## **DISCUSSION**

1. What is the area of your/your organisation's responsibility in relation to this topic?
2. How much of your daily work is done through the internet? What do you think about internet security in Cambodia, and your personal safety?
3. Do you feel you can freely express your opinion on the internet? Why do you feel that way?
4. Have you personally experienced any restrictions on the internet and how? And if you did, how did such threats appear to you?
5. Do/Does you/your organisation use an online security protocol? Are there any specific security measures you have adopted (such as passwords, 2-factor authentication, email encryption, mobile apps, self-verification etc)?
6. Do you think you/your organisation have been under some forms of online surveillance? If yes, how does such surveillance affect your work? Who do you think is behind such surveillance and why?
7. There are many discussions about complete surveillance of the internet with the introduction of the Sub Decree on National Internet Gateway. Do you think it is the intention of the Royal Government? If no, what do you see as consequences of complete internet control by the government? If yes, what are the benefits of the NIG legislation?
8. In your opinion, how do you think the Royal Government and ISPs and Social Media platform operators should go about addressing journalists' perceived concerns over surveillance and censorship? In your opinion, how should the Royal Government go about securing increased buy-ins from journalists and citizens at large for the introduction of new digital infrastructure and regulations?
9. How would you like to see journalists and citizen journalists contributing to Cambodia's promotions of freedom of expression and rules of laws?
10. Do you have any recommendations for journalists and citizen journalists as well as the agencies that support them?

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