

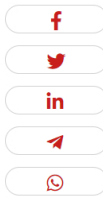


Four garment workers killed and 25 injured in truck accident

12 August 2021 8:17 PM |
Khy Sovuthy



Garment workers travel by truck to factories in Phnom Penh, Cambodia/ Panha Chhorpoan



At least four garment workers died and 25 were injured in a traffic accident on Wednesday evening when a truck carrying bricks crashed into a truck transporting workers in Kampong Speu province's Samroang Tong district.

Tap Lon, deputy police chief of Kampong Speu province, said Thursday afternoon that the accident took place around 5pm Wednesday.

"Four people have died in a traffic accident yesterday evening including three people who died yesterday and one more who died today," said Lon.

He said the accident occurred when the driver of the brick truck tried to overtake a motorbike, crashing into the transportation truck in the other lane. The truck was carrying 35 garment workers.

According to the report from Kampong Speu province's Samroang Tong district police Kong Huot, 31, died immediately after the crash, while Choeu Sreynim, 31, Nop Sava, 29, and Chea Da, 41, died after arriving at the hospital.

"Four people died, 17 people were seriously injured and eight people had minor injuries," the report said.

Lon, the deputy police chief, said there have been three garment worker truck accidents in his province since January.

"The previous cases did not have garment workers die but they were seriously and minorly injured," said Lon.

Khut Sophal, Samroang Tong district police chief, said that both drivers and two drivers' assistants were injured and sent to hospitals. He declined to comment further saying the case had been sent to the provincial police.

Pav Sina, president of the Collective Union of Movement of Workers (CUMW), said that while such accidents have decreased amid the pandemic they remain a concern. There is little regulation of garment worker transport, and the cheapest transit available to workers remains trucks — where workers are tightly packed standing up in the truck bed. Because their salary is so low, said Sina, few workers can afford to choose safer transportation.

"In the past, we requested the Labor Ministry and Garment Manufacturers Association of Cambodia in every minimum wage negotiation meeting to arrange buses to transport workers safely," said Sina.

In the first six months of this year, 709 people died and 1,792 others were injured in 1,261 road accidents across the country, mostly in Phnom Penh, Minister of Interior Sar Kheng said in July 2021.

Heng Chantheary of the Public Order Department at the Interior Ministry declined to comment on Thursday, while Chhay Kim Khoeun, National Police's spokesman, could not be reached for comment.

Labor Ministry spokesman Heng Sour could not be reached for comment.

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