



**PRESS RELEASE – Phnom Penh, 27 September 2016**

**CCHR publishes report revealing grave impacts of land conflicts on Cambodia’s women, and ten new profiles highlighting Cambodia’s land disputes**

[The Cambodian Center for Human Rights](#) (“CCHR”) has today – 27 September 2016 – published a report entitled, “*Cambodia’s Women in Land Conflict*” (the “Report”). The Report is the outcome of research conducted by CCHR’s Land Reform Project on women in land conflict throughout the Kingdom of Cambodia (“Cambodia”), and is available for download from CCHR’s website in [English](#) and [Khmer](#). In addition, CCHR has published ten new profiles of activists and communities involved in land conflicts in eight provinces in Cambodia. The ten profiles complete CCHR’s [Land Profile Series](#), which highlight 30 cases across 15 provinces and Phnom Penh, whereby communities and activists involved in land disputes have suffered land and related human rights violations at the hands of the authorities and private actors.

The Report is based on the findings of CCHR’s field research, whereby 612 women affected by land conflict were surveyed from May to June 2016, in 22 communities in 12 of Cambodia’s provinces and Phnom Penh. By asking respondents how land conflict had impacted on various aspects of their lives, the survey explored the unique ways in which women are affected by land conflict.

Women’s security of tenure is essential to ensuring gender equality and the enjoyment of several other human rights. Moreover, traditional gender roles remain widespread in Cambodia; thus, women embroiled in the country’s numerous land conflicts face a number of challenges, given that a woman’s ability to perform such traditional roles is inextricably linked to her security of tenure. CCHR’s research found that over three quarters (78.9%) of women involved in land conflict feel their land tenure situation is either ‘not secure’ or ‘not secure at all’. Almost a quarter (24.4%) of the women had been evicted from their homes and almost all (98%) of the evictions were forced or violent, indicative of the widespread and systematic nature of forced evictions in Cambodia. In addition, 73.1% of all the women surveyed had experienced harassment or intimidation by the authorities.

Revealing the tremendous psychological impacts of land conflict on women, 98.2% of the women reported that their mental health had been adversely affected as a result of the land conflict. Alarming, 46.2% of the women had thought about committing suicide; and 18.1% had attempted suicide.

The findings reveal that land conflict leads to increased incidences of domestic violence, with 23% of women in relationships self-identifying as victims of domestic abuse; 53.9% of these women had never experienced violence at the hands of their partners prior to the land conflict. Equally as alarming, increased violence between mothers and children was also revealed: 40.1% of mothers

involved in land disputes stated they were violent towards their children, with almost half (48.1%) having not acted violently towards them before the land dispute. Further, 43.9% of the women reported having to remove their children from school as a result of the land conflict, and over a third (36%) reported having to put their children to work – likely amounting to child labor in many cases.

The findings reveal an urgent need for intervention. The Report concludes by offering recommendations to relevant stakeholders, including the Royal Government of Cambodia, concerning security of tenure, domestic violence, mental health and children. It is CCHR's hope that the Report and its recommendations will serve to improve the situation for women and children involved in land conflict in Cambodia, and provide further evidence of the need for greater land tenure security for women.

**CCHR Land Reform Project Coordinator Mr. Vann Sophath comments:**

*“While the many devastating impacts of Cambodia’s land conflicts on peoples’ livelihoods and wellbeing are widely acknowledged, CCHR’s latest report reveals how the country’s ongoing land conflicts place a specific and overwhelming strain on Cambodia’s women, whose ability to act as the primary caregivers in a family is dependent on their security of tenure. In particular, the grave findings that land conflicts exacerbate the incidence of domestic violence, poor mental health and child labor in Cambodia, should serve as a catalyst for the Cambodian government to swiftly resolve the country’s land conflicts, ensure land tenure security for all and take further steps to realize its commitments to protecting the rights of women and children.”*

**For more information, please contact CCHR Land Reform Project Coordinator Mr. Vann Sophath via telephone at +855 (0) 12 941 206 or e-mail at [vann.sophath@cchrcambodia.org](mailto:vann.sophath@cchrcambodia.org) or CCHR Human Rights Consultant Ms. Alysha Khambay via telephone at +855 (0) 12 479 174 or email at [alysha.khambay@cchrcambodia.org](mailto:alysha.khambay@cchrcambodia.org)**

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Notes to the Editor:

CCHR, founded in November 2002, is a non-aligned, independent, non-governmental organization that works to promote and protect democracy and respect for human rights throughout Cambodia.

CCHR is a member of International Freedom of Expression Exchanges (IFEX), the global network for freedom of expression. CCHR is also a member of the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) SOS-Torture Network.

The Cambodian Human Rights Portal [www.sithi.org](http://www.sithi.org) is the 2011 winner of the Information Society Innovation Fund Award in the category of Rights and Freedoms and the 2013 winner of the Communication for Social Change Award, awarded by the Centre of Communication and Social Change at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia.