

House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

Hearing  
on  
**Transnational Repression and the U.S. Response**

02/15/2024 - 10:00 a.m.

BUILDING NAME  
Rayburn House Office Building

Statement of Sarada Taing  
Chief Correspondent & Anchor  
The Cambodia Daily

Mr. Chairman McGovern, Mr. Chairman Smith, and distinguished members of the committee, I am deeply honored to address you today on a matter that not only resonates with me personally but also touches upon the core of our shared democratic principles. My name is Sarada Taing, and I serve as the Chief Correspondent and Anchor for The Cambodia Daily, an independent news organization founded by the American journalist Bernard Krisher in 1993. Once published in Phnom Penh, our newspaper stood as a beacon of independent journalism, often challenging those who sought to quell dissent and stifle freedom of expression.

In 2017, in a sweeping move against the opposition and independent media, the Cambodian government and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) forced The Cambodia Daily to halt its print publication. In response, we took to the digital sphere, launching The Cambodia Daily Khmer in the United States to continue our

mission of unfettered reporting on Cambodian affairs and the diaspora.

However, our commitment to truth has come at a great cost. The CPP's influence, extending even to the United States, has placed me and many others in a precarious position. Cambodian Americans who have aligned with the CPP have often done so under the duress of promises or threats, trading their voice and safety for access or opportunity in Cambodia.

The gravity of this situation was underscored in early June 2023 when Mr. Pheng, a vocal CPP sympathizer, launched a vitriolic campaign against me following our investigative reporting on corruption in Cambodia. This campaign escalated to direct threats against my life and the safety of my family, both here in the U.S. and in Cambodia, demonstrating the CPP's relentless pursuit to silence its critics without regard for borders or the rule of law.

Our reporting has illuminated not only the CPP's local transgressions but also its efforts to suppress and intimidate the Cambodian diaspora within the United States, revealing a disturbing pattern of transnational repression. This has been further corroborated by reputable sources such as the Washington Post and Voice of America, underscoring the growing concern over the CPP's actions against those perceived as adversaries.

The incidents I've detailed today are not isolated but part of a broader oppressive trend by the CPP that undermines the ability of journalists to report freely and of individuals to express dissent without fear of retribution. This trend poses a significant threat to the democratic values we hold dear and to the principle of freedom of speech that is fundamental to our society.

Given these circumstances, I respectfully urge the committee to consider the following recommendations:

1. Implement targeted restrictions on entry into the United States for individuals associated with the Cambodian ruling party who engage in activities that undermine democratic processes and human rights.
2. Investigate financial transactions from the CPP to entities within the United States to prevent the use of funds in supporting activities contrary to our nation's commitment to human rights and democratic integrity.
3. Enhance oversight of the CPP's organizational presence in the United States to protect the rights of Cambodian Americans to free speech and association without fear of intimidation or reprisal.

In conclusion, I thank you for your commitment to defending human rights and upholding the democratic ideals that define us. Your support is crucial in safeguarding these freedoms, not just for Cambodian Americans but for all who seek refuge and voice in the face of authoritarianism.