



Senior Lawyer Huon Chundy discusses a legal dispute with indigenous people.

## BACKGROUND

Cambodia's justice system is ineffectual, corrupt, and lacks independence. Human rights groups work in limited democratic space and the government responds to dissent with fluctuating tolerance. Weak rule of law and ingrained corruption, as reflected in land grabbing and illegal evictions, can cause instability. USG short-term goals focus on keeping political space open through support of human rights groups that focus on access to legal rights, especially land rights, and political rights. The reform process is a long-term effort. To develop consensus for reform, USAID will strengthen legal professionals' skills, upgrade court administration, and support legal aid providers and key human rights groups. The expected five-year result is that the Cambodian government will have improved anti-corruption and accountability practices.

## PARTNERS

**East West Management Institute (EWMI)** – EWMI, in partnership with the American Bar Association (ABA), supports human rights and legal reform movements through the Program on Rights and Justice (PRAJ). The PRAJ project comprises: 1) a large-scale grants program to local human rights and legal aid organizations; 2) the Public Interest Legal Advocacy Project (PILAP), Cambodia's first high-impact legal advocacy project; 3) a clinical legal education program to build the professional skills of new lawyers and to support access to justice in rural areas; 4) technical capacity support in case management and legal analysis to local organizations; 5) education of legal and judicial professionals; and 6) law reform to improve transparency and build efficiency of the justice system.

**American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS)** - ACILS provides assistance to workers in the garment, tourism and education sectors to form and run democratic and professional unions. ACILS educates workers about their rights under the Labor Code and Constitution. Additionally, ACILS provides legal aid to workers' unions and technical support in negotiating collective-bargaining agreements with employers.

**The Asia foundation (TAF)** – TAF implements USAID's Counter-Trafficking in Persons Program (CTIP) which provides a broad framework of support to the Royal Government of Cambodia initiated National Task Force on Human Trafficking. CTIP has forged a strong working relationship with the other key stakeholders already working with the Government on TIP issues, IOM, Unicef, and UNIAP, and has continued ongoing relations with the NGO counter-trafficking community to bring Government and civil society one step closer to a coordinated approach on combating trafficking in Cambodia.

**Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)** - DC-Cam is Cambodia's only independent, non-governmental institution devoted to documenting the Khmer Rouge history. DC-Cam collects evidence, conducts research, and promotes accountability for the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge through public outreach activities. USAID has established an endowment to help ensure the future financial sustainability of DC-Cam.

## ILLUSTRATIVE RESULTS TO DATE

- Since 2003, USADI/EWMI has provided over \$9 million in sub-grants to local NGOs and PVOs to support promotion and protection of key political rights and civil liberties through various monitoring, grassroots advocacy, and legal aid activities. Legal assistance to approximately 3,000 human rights violation cases provided annually.
- In 2007, EWMI/ABA partnered with the Royal University of Law and Economics to launch the first national mock court trial competition in Cambodia, facilitated Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) passage of the judicial ethics code, conducted training of judges and prosecutors on ethics and land law at the Royal Academy of Judicial Professions, and introduced systems to improve transparency at the Kandal courthouse.
- With assistance from ACILS over 4,500 enterprise leaders and over 550 union federation leaders have been trained in collective bargaining and union building.
- In 2007, promoted the government's establishment of the first National Task Force to combat trafficking.
- DC-Cam has catalogued many thousands of biographies and historical documents from the Khmer Rouge era; trained law students and NGO workers on international human rights and criminal law concepts; and organized thousands of victims to tour the ECCC tribunal facilities.