



Briefing Paper

Strikes and Protests in Cambodia

CENTER FOR ALLIANCE OF LABOR AND HUMAN RIGHTS (CENTRAL)
Labor Rights Monitoring Program
Briefing Paper | January-September 2026

Executive Summary

Between January and September 2026, CENTRAL documented **27 strikes, protests, and labor disputes involving approximately 34,455 workers** across Cambodia. Labor unrest remained concentrated in the garment and footwear sector, accounting for approximately **73 percent of all documented actions**.

Economic grievances remained the main driver of worker mobilization, particularly disputes relating to unpaid wages, delayed salary payments, severance payments, bonuses, and legally mandated benefits. However, concerns regarding workplace dignity, abusive management practices, anti-union discrimination, and restrictions on Freedom of Association (FoA) also featured prominently.

Collective worker action resulted in the recovery of at least **US\$326,760** in documented wages, compensation, and benefits through negotiations, mediation, and dispute-resolution mechanisms.

The findings indicate persistent challenges in industrial relations and labor-rights compliance, particularly within Cambodia's export-oriented manufacturing sectors.

Key Statistics

Indicator	Figure
Total strikes and protests documented	27
Workers involved	34,455
Compensation recovered	US\$326,760
Garment & footwear cases	20
Construction cases	4
Agriculture cases	1
Casino cases	1
NagaWorld dispute	1

Sector Distribution

Sector	Cases	Share
Garment & Footwear	20	73%
Construction	4	15%
Agriculture	1	4%
Casino	1	4%
Other/NagaWorld	1	4%

Key Findings

1. Wage and Benefit Disputes Remain the Primary Driver

Most labor disputes were linked to:

- Unpaid wages
- Delayed salary payments
- Severance compensation
- Annual bonuses
- Seniority indemnity
- Factory closure compensation

Economic insecurity continues to be the principal factor driving worker mobilization across sectors.

2. Workplace Dignity Is Becoming a Major Concern

Several large-scale protests were triggered by allegations of abusive behavior, disrespectful treatment, and poor workplace relations.

Notable examples included:

- YJC Footwear (2,500 workers)
- Ming Yang Factory (2,000 workers)
- Justin Allen Cambodia (1,000 workers)

These incidents indicate growing worker expectations regarding dignity, respect, and fair treatment in the workplace.

3. Freedom of Association Concerns Persist

Several disputes involved:

- Dismissal of union leaders
- Anti-union discrimination
- Retaliation against worker representatives
- Restrictions on collective bargaining

The continued labor dispute involving NagaWorld workers remains one of Cambodia's most prominent examples of unresolved Freedom of Association concerns.

Major Labor Actions

Workplace	Workers Involved
Feng Yu/Bolstar Factory	8,000
Yi DA Factory	6,000
YJC Footwear	2,500
JS Company	2,057
Triumphen Dragon Cambodia	2,000
Ming Yang Factory	2,000
Ti Chao Textile Cambodia	2,000
Rayling Factory	1,500

These large-scale actions highlight the capacity of workers to engage in collective action when grievances remain unresolved.

Geographic Distribution

Labor disputes were concentrated in Cambodia's major industrial and manufacturing zones, including:

- Kandal Province
- Kampong Speu Province
- Phnom Penh
- Svay Rieng Province
- Sihanoukville
- Pursat Province
- Koh Kong Province
- Banteay Meanchey Province

The concentration of disputes reflects the geographic distribution of Cambodia's garment, footwear, construction, and service industries.

Compensation Recovery Analysis

CENTRAL documented at least **US\$326,760** recovered for workers during the reporting period.

Notable Settlements

Workplace	Amount Recovered
QS Decoration Construction	US\$110,000
Tropical Fruit Asia Cambodia	US\$92,560
ML Factory	US\$83,200
Golden Casino	US\$5,000
Other Construction Cases	US\$36,000+

These outcomes demonstrate the value of worker organizing, trade union representation, dispute mediation, and labor-rights advocacy in securing remedies for affected workers.

Implications for Stakeholders

Government

The findings underscore the need to strengthen labor-law enforcement, improve labor inspection systems, and ensure workers have access to effective dispute-resolution mechanisms.

Employers

Employers should prioritize compliance with labor laws, strengthen workplace grievance procedures, and engage constructively with worker representatives to reduce industrial conflict.

Global Brands and Buyers

Given the concentration of disputes in export-oriented sectors, international brands have an important role in ensuring responsible purchasing practices, monitoring labor-rights compliance, and supporting remediation where violations occur.

Development Partners and Donors

Supporting labor-rights monitoring, social dialogue, and worker empowerment remains critical for promoting decent work, reducing labor disputes, and strengthening responsible business conduct in Cambodia.

Recommendations

To the Royal Government of Cambodia

- Strengthen enforcement of labor legislation.
- Improve wage-payment monitoring and compliance.
- Enhance protection against anti-union discrimination.
- Expand access to effective labor-dispute resolution mechanisms.

To Employers

- Ensure timely payment of wages and benefits.
- Respect workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively.
- Establish effective grievance-handling mechanisms.
- Promote respectful workplace management practices.

To International Brands

- Integrate Freedom of Association indicators into due diligence systems.
- Strengthen supplier monitoring and remediation processes.
- Align purchasing practices with labor-rights commitments.
- Support meaningful social dialogue at factory level.

To Trade Unions and Civil Society Organizations

- Continue documenting labor-rights violations.
- Strengthen worker awareness of labor rights.
- Promote collective bargaining and peaceful dispute resolution.
- Coordinate advocacy efforts to address systemic labor-rights concerns.

Conclusion

The first nine months of 2026 demonstrate that labor disputes in Cambodia continue to be driven primarily by economic grievances, while workplace dignity concerns and Freedom of Association violations remain significant contributors to industrial conflict.

Although workers secured more than **US\$326,760** in documented compensation and wage recovery, the persistence of disputes highlights ongoing weaknesses in labor-rights compliance, industrial relations, and workplace accountability. Strengthened enforcement, responsible business conduct, and meaningful social dialogue will be essential to promoting sustainable and equitable labor relations in Cambodia.