

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/cambodia-journalist-who-covered-illegal-06-02-2014,45827.html>

Asia - Cambodia

Terrible murder

Journalist who covered illegal fishing beaten to death by fishermen

6 February 2014

Reporters Without Borders is appalled to learn that local newspaper reporter **Suon Chan** was beaten to death by fishermen outside his home in Peam Chhkork commune, in the central province of Kampong Chhnang, on 1 February, and that his coverage of illegal fishing may have been the reason.

"Like the [Cambodian Centre for Independent Media](#) (CCIM) and the United Nations, we urge the authorities to shed light on this act of savagery, to not rule a possible link to the victim's work, and to bring those responsible to justice as soon as possible," said Benjamin Ismail, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk, offering his heartfelt condolences to the family.

"If it is confirmed that Suon Chan was killed because of his work as a journalist, this murder would constitute yet another grave violation of freedom of information in Cambodia. A thorough investigation is needed to end the [tradition of impunity](#) for those who murder journalists in Cambodia."

Suon Chan, 44, who worked for the Khmer-language newspaper *Meakea Kampuchea* (*Cambodia's Way*), was attacked by a group of about ten fishermen when he left his home on the evening of 1 February to buy cigarettes.

The local police said that four of the fishermen beat him unconscious with stones and bamboo sticks, and that he died from injuries to the head and neck while being taken to hospital. Two friends who had heard his cries for help and who tried to intervene were also badly beaten and had to be taken to hospital.

The assailants fled but Peam Chhkork police chief Duong Vuthy said the four main suspects had been identified and were being actively sought by the police.

The police chief initially said that Suon Chan's articles about illegal fishing in the commune could have been the motive for the attack. But he subsequently retracted and said the police were still investigating the motive. Suon Chan's assailants nonetheless may have been fishermen who had been the targets of measures taken by the police on the basis of information he had gathered.

Ranked 143rd out of 179 countries in the 2013 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#), Cambodia is notorious for the impunity enjoyed by those responsible for using violence against journalist.

Reporters Without Borders is appending a [CCIM list](#) of 12 journalists whose murders in the past 10 years have gone unpunished.

You can download those documents on our website :

- Murdered journalists 1994-2014 - CCIM, (PDF - 352.3 kb)
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