

Login Register



ភ្នំពេញប៉ុស្តិ៍

Subscribe

Search

# The Phnom Penh Post

Tue Apr 20 2021 14:20:34 GMT+0700 (Indochina Time)


[HOME](#) [NATIONAL](#) [BUSINESS](#) [LIFESTYLE](#) [SPECIAL REPORT](#) [TRAVEL](#) [SPORT](#) [OPINION](#) [INTERNATIONAL](#) [MULTIMEDIA](#)

NOTICES

Cambodia Daily's website

SUPPLEMENTS

blocked by government order

PDF SUPPLEMENT

Mekh Dara and Erin Handley | Publication date: 04/20/2021 14:20:34 ICT

Share



Cambodia Daily staffers walk past a blown-up first edition in their office last September, days before the paper was forced to close. Recently-obtained documents show the government ordered private internet service providers to block access to the paper's site. AFP



Documents obtained today – and a surprising tweet – have confirmed what observers have suspected for months: that the Cambodian government ordered internet service providers (ISPs) to block access to the website of the recently shuttered *Cambodia Daily*.

Since shortly after the newspaper was forced to close on September 4, following the levying of a \$6.3 million tax bill, access to the *Daily's* site has proved patchy, with online users questioning whether certain ISPs had blocked the site.

Documents show that Tax Department head Kong Vibol asked the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPTC) to order ISPs to block the *Daily's* IP address, Facebook page and Twitter account, primarily to “prevent the *Cambodia Daily* from making an excuse for why they were shut down from publishing, and secondly, to prevent them from continuing to operate online,” according to a letter dated September 5.

Vibol added that his department was “taking serious action” because the *Daily* had failed to “comply with the law” and pay the tax bill, one critics described as an “exorbitant” sum designed to shut down the often critical paper.

A second letter, dated September 28 and signed by Telecoms Ministry Secretary of State Khay Khunheng, instructs that “all companies who are providing internet

<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/cambodia-dailys-website-twitter-blocked-government-order>

## RELATED ARTICLES



**Cambodia Daily GM's lawyer invited for questioning**



**Cambodia Daily publisher's defamation trial again deferred**



**Cambodia Daily publisher's defamation trial begins**

services in Cambodia must set up software programs and devices that control the internet to block the webpage . . . and guarantee that this webpage and IP address will no longer be operating in the Kingdom of the Cambodia”

It also requires ISPs to filter the *Daily's* Facebook and Twitter accounts “in order to stop the operation of the account of the two pages”. The documents came to light after one ISP, Sinet KH, made a frank admission on Twitter late on Friday.

“We can confirm that we’ve been ‘ordered’ to block access to @cambodiadaily since many months ago,” @sinetKH wrote in a since-deleted tweet.

When pressed for more details, the representative wrote: “We are surprised by the reactions of this. The ‘block’ was long ago. Apart from a couple of complaints, most of our customers never noticed a thing. @cambodiadaily was never a popular web destination in the first place,” followed by the hashtag “#JustDoingOurJobs”.

Anecdotally, internet users have noted difficulty in accessing the *Daily* through MekongNet, Online and WiCam. MekongNet’s Sreang Pito confirmed the *Daily's* IP address had been blocked to “follow government”.

Ezecom CEO Paul Blanche-Horgan said he had never seen such a letter, nor had Neak Longkheang at Digi. Representatives from other ISPs could not be reached today.

*Cambodia Daily* Deputy Publisher Deborah Krisher-Steele said she did not know what “legal basis” there was for her site to be blocked.

“Of course it’s very disappointing that many Cambodians are not able [to] access our archived award-winning reports,” she said in an email.

Im Vutha, spokesman for the Telecommunication Regulator of Cambodia, said while he was unaware of the letter, as a newspaper the *Daily* should fall under the purview of the Information Ministry, with the government having “a right to block their websites”.

“If they do something to not follow the law, the government has the right to enforce [the law],” Vutha said.

When asked in October if the government had ordered such a ban, Information Minister Khieu Kanharith responded: “We didn’t ask to block any website.” Today, he maintained he was unaware of the letter, adding that he had “no competence on cyber space”.

Moeun Chhean Nariddh, director of Cambodian Institute for Media Studies, said he understood the government “had a right to use the law”, but the block was a blow to press freedom. “Any shut down or block of the site can be perceived as censorship,” he said.

The controversial Law on Telecommunications provides “in the event of a force majeure” – an unforeseeable circumstance that prevents someone from fulfilling a contract – “MPTC or competent ministries or institutions may order relevant telecommunications operators to take necessary measures by relying on the Decision of the Royal Government”.

That “ill-defined” article was slammed in a 2016 legal analysis by rights group Licadho, which said the provision was “vulnerable to misuse” and might be “abused to temporarily shut down social networks and other internet-based services”.

*Updated: 11:12pm, Sunday, 4th February 2018*

Correction: Due to an editing error, a previous version of this article misstated the day in which interviews were conducted and the document was obtained. It was Sunday, February 4, 2018.



begin



**Cambodian media under threat: report**



**Telecoms regulator to investigate internet providers for snubbing Cambodia Daily ban**

**Court date set for Tax Department's defamation case against Cambodia Daily deputy publisher**



The Phnom Penh Municipal Court has set a March 22 trial date for a public defamation case filed by the Tax Department against Cambodia Daily deputy



**Cambodia Daily brings out online-only platform**



**Tax chief backs Daily shuttering**



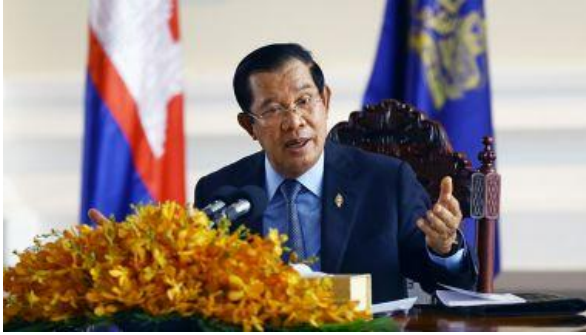
**Former Cambodia Daily reporters charged with ‘incitement’**



**Report shows pressure on news to favour government**

Contact authors: Mech Dara and Erin Handley

## MOST VIEWED



### Phnom Penh placed in two-week lockdown

The government has decided to place Phnom Penh in lockdown for two weeks, effective April 14 midnight through April 28, as Cambodia continues to grapple with the ongoing community outbreak of Covid-19, which has seen no sign of subsiding. According to a directive signed by Prime Minister



### Cambodia on the verge of national tragedy, WHO warns

The World Health Organisation (WHO) in Cambodia warned that the country had reached another critical point amid a sudden, huge surge in community transmission cases and deaths. "We stand on the brink of a national tragedy because of Covid-19. Despite our best efforts, we are



### Hun Sen: Stay where you are, or else



Prime Minister Hun Sen warned that the two-week lockdown of Phnom Penh and adjacent Kandal provincial town Takmao could be extended if people are not cooperative by staying home. "Now let me make this clear: stay in your home, village, and district and remain where



### **Businesses in capital told to get travel permit amid lockdown through One Window Service**

The Phnom Penh Municipal Administration has issued guidelines on how to get travel permission for priority groups during the lockdown of Phnom Penh, directing private institutions to apply through the municipality's One Window Service and limit their staff to a mere two per cent. In



### **Vaccination open to foreigners in Cambodia**

The Ministry of Health on April 8 issued an announcement on Covid-19 vaccination for foreigners residing and working in Cambodia, directing the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and local authorities to register them. Health minister Mam Bun Heng, who is also head of the inter-ministerial



### **Ministry names types of business permitted amid lockdown**

The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training singled out 11 types of business that are permitted to operate during the lockdown of Phnom Penh and Takmao town, which run through April 28. Those include (1) food-processing enterprises and slaughterhouses; (2) providers of public services such as firefighting, utility and

**Post Media Co Ltd**

The Elements Condominium, Level 7  
Hun Sen Boulevard  
Phum Prek Talong  
Sangkat Chak Angre Krom  
12353 Phnom Penh  
Cambodia

Tel: +855(0) 23 888 161 / 162

Fax: +855(0) 23 214 318

Copyright © 2020 The Phnom Penh Post. All Rights Reserved.

**Company**

About us  
Staff list  
Advertising  
Contact  
Privacy policy  
Refund Policy  
Staff

**Archives**

7Days  
LIFT  
Siem Reap Insider  
Videos

**Sections**

World  
National  
Business  
Lifestyle  
Sports  
Jobs  
PDF Printing