



**USAID**  
ជំនួយពីពលរដ្ឋអាមេរិក



# Promoting the Right to Information and Internet Freedom



ក្រសួង ៣

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# ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ⇔ <b>HR:</b> Human Rights                               | ⇔ <b>DRWG:</b> Digital Rights Working Group                        |
| ⇔ <b>SN:</b> Social Networking                          | ⇔ <b>A2I:</b> Access to Information                                |
| ⇔ <b>OONI:</b> Open Observatory of Network Interference | ⇔ <b>NGO:</b> Non-Government Organization                          |
| ⇔ <b>CSO:</b> Civil Society Organization                | ⇔ <b>CPDD:</b> Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development |
| ⇔ <b>API:</b> Advocacy and Policy Institute             | ⇔ <b>RTI:</b> Rights To Information                                |
| ⇔ <b>iMAP:</b> Internet Monitoring Action Plan          |  |

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**During the reporting period According to the Plan, several results were completed as below:**

- 📄 Developed and submitted the work plan and MEL template of the “Promoting the Right to Information and Internet Freedom” project during the first quarter to FHI-360.
- 📄 Project teams are developing the training curriculum on internet freedom, digital rights, freedom of expression, information online, and policy advocacy. And started preparing logistics for two training courses.
- 📄 A curriculum on internet freedom, digital rights, freedom of expression, information online, and policy advocacy was developed and finalized. The training curriculum covered access to information, information online, monitoring internet censorship, understanding digital rights, promoting Internet Freedom, and advocating for using OONI Probe Tools. Additionally, the training sought to establish networks among CSOs and youths to increase the number of measurements using the OONI Probe.
- 📄 77 participants (39 females) participated in two training courses on iMAP, OONI, freedom of expression, digital rights, and digital security for two target groups. The first group included participants from A2I and CSS networks, while the second group comprised 44 university youths. As a result, 82% of participants increased their knowledge of key concepts, rights, and freedom under the Internet freedom umbrella such as digital rights, freedom of information, the right to Internet access, and freedom from Internet censorship.
- 📄 During the training, all 77 participants set up the OONI Probe and practiced running OONI. Moreover, the OONI network was created in the telegram group. As a result, at least 780 OONI running times were run in June. Then, from July to September, 69 youths (52 females) received support from the CSS project: As a result, there were 1,041,282 running times on the OONI probe.



| Month     | measurement_count | ok_count | anomaly_count | confirmed_count |
|-----------|-------------------|----------|---------------|-----------------|
| July      | 402228            | 371002   | 23189         | 856             |
| August    | 339245            | 315726   | 16222         | 1095            |
| September | 299809            | 282948   | 11234         | 816             |
| Total     | 1041282           | 969676   | 50645         | 2767            |

- ☰ Drafting the Cambodia 2024 Internet Censorship Report: The annual report from July 2023 to June 2024 showed 2,440,169 running times of the Open Monitor Observatory of Network Interference (OONI Probe Tools), which is used to monitor internet censorship, to 1,940 websites tested to monitor internet censorship. Among these, sixty-five (65) websites were identified as blocked (meaning that there are some issues in accessing the website and could also indicate problems only on the user’s end). The categories with the most blockage are NEWS=25, Human Rights Issues (HUMR)=4, File-sharing (File)=4, and Gambling (GMB)=1, Detailed information on these 65 websites, including their names, blocking periods, blocking methods, and the involved Internet Service Providers. This report was presented to the European Union, the Australian Embassy, EuroCham, USAID, and development partners in a joint working group meeting.
- ☰ Refreshing the OONI Network and Holding Consultative Meetings: The draft Cambodia 2024 Internet Censorship Report was reviewed in consultation with CSS partners, members of the Digital Rights Working Group, the Access to Information Working Group, the CPDD Working Group, youth representatives, FHI 360, and the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL). A total of 26 participants, including 12 females, contributed to the consultation and provided feedback for the drafting of the Cambodia 2024 Internet Censorship Report.

📄 Digital Rights working group meeting: A total of eleven (11) meetings were conducted to discuss the concept note and preparations for the Phnom Penh Internet Forum (PIIF), organized by the Digital Rights Working Group (DRWG) and co-hosted by API, YRDP, and ODC, scheduled for October 17th and 18th, 2024. The Cambodia 2024 Internet Censorship Report (Report 2024) will be disseminated to the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications during the PIIF event on the first day, which will feature Panel Discussion 1: “Cambodia’s Vision Toward Digital Transformation: Challenges and Opportunities.” Speakers will include representatives from the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (TBC), Jason Chumtong, Country Representative of KAS Cambodia (TBC), Martin Brisson, Executive Director of EuroCham, and a representative from the Advocacy and Policy Institute (API).

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project contributes to promoting fundamental rights, defending internet freedoms, and safeguarding democracy in Cambodia. The project implements activities that address the contemporary challenges for civil society and media as the Cambodian government has rapidly put in place restrictive regulatory instruments and investment in surveillance capacities that lead to increasing risks of arbitrary as well as disproportional restrictions to freedom of expression and freedom of the media via the internet<sup>1</sup>. For instance, measures like the National Internet Gateway, the Cyber Crime Law, and the Domain Name Law, are geared towards narrowing the space and restricting freedom for exercising digital rights, free expression, access to information, and freedom of the Media as well as an emergence of threats, and personal insecurity. According to the OONI Explorer measurement data collected by the Internet Monitoring and Action Project (IMAP)<sup>2</sup> In 9 countries (Myanmar, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam) using the Open Observatory of Network Interference (called OONI Probe) shows that there were 43 websites (national and international Organization Websites) were blocked by Domain Name System (DNS), mainly by VIETTEL (CAMBODIA) PTE., LTD. (AS38623) and S.I Group (AS38623) from January to June 2022. The highest number of blockings were found in the Gambling and News Media categories. News and other websites are periodically blocked in Cambodia, particularly those that disseminate information that could be perceived as a threat to the ruling government<sup>3</sup>. In July 2018, the government ordered internet service providers (ISPs) to block at least 15 news websites during the country’s commune election<sup>4</sup>. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has reportedly blocked access to news sites<sup>5</sup>. Hence, civic engagement in gathering evidence and influencing government steps to constrain internet freedom must be enhanced since civil society is still mostly naive regarding digital security and individual privacy online.

<sup>1</sup> Human rights impact of new technologies on civic space in South-East Asia, OHCHR.

<sup>2</sup> Welcome — iMAP (sinarproject.org)

<sup>3</sup> Freedom House. (2021). Cambodia. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/cambodia/freedom-net/2021>

<sup>4</sup> Narin, S. and Chhengpor, A. (2018) Government Confirms Blocking 15 Independent News Sites Over Poll “Disruption,” VOA Cambodia. <https://www.voacambodia.com/a/government-confirm-blocking-fifteen-independent-news-sites-over-poll-disruption/4503739.html>

<sup>5</sup> Freedom House. (2021). Cambodia. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/cambodia/freedom-net/2021>

Activities to be implemented are interconnected. It starts with enhancing knowledge of the rights to information, internet freedom, digital rights, freedom of online expression, and freedom of the media linked to the context of Cambodia's restrictive regulatory framework. API will utilize the Open Observatory of Network Interference (called OONI Probe), a free software used to identify specifically which potential websites are blocked by the government. Internet censorship monitoring will be operated by the project's target groups including NGO working group members, youth network members, and community youth volunteers who will be trained under activity 1.1. Based on data collected from the OONI probe running, API will produce internet censorship monitoring reports and dialogue with the concerned government ministries and working groups as well as NGO and Media working groups including youth networks, and, more importantly, use the report as an evidence base for policy dialogues and policy influence.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

To promote fundamental rights, defend internet freedoms, and safeguard democracy in Cambodia, API achieved this goal by helping the Digital Right Working Group (DRWG), Access to Information Working Group (A2I), Budget Working Group (BWG), Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD), youth network members, as well as community youth volunteers to increase the knowledge necessary and utilize the tools to participate in internet monitoring in Cambodia and advocate for accountability and media transparency.

### Objective/Outcome 1: Increase Knowledge And Skills Of Civil Society And Youths On Internet Censorship Monitoring, Internet Freedom, And Advocacy.

#### Activity 1.1: Develop A Training Curriculum On Internet Censorship Monitoring, Internet Freedom, And Advocacy.

A curriculum on internet freedom, digital rights, freedom of expression, information online, and policy advocacy was developed and finalized. The training curriculum covered access to information, information online, monitoring internet censorship, understanding digital rights, promoting Internet Freedom, and advocating for using OONI Probe Tools. Additionally, the training sought to establish networks among CSOs and youths to increase the number of measurements using the OONI Probe.

## Activity 1.2 Organize Internet Censorship Monitoring, Internet Freedom, And Advocacy For NGO Working Groups, Youth Networks, And Community Youth Volunteers.

Two training courses were conducted on iMAP, OONI, Freedom of Expression, Digital Rights, and Digital Security for two distinct target groups with 85 participants (54 females). The first group included participants from A2I and CSS networks, while the second group comprised 44 university youths. The training aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of civil society and youths in monitoring internet censorship, understanding Digital Rights, promoting Internet Freedom, and advocating for the use of OONI Probe Tools. Additionally, the training sought to establish networks among CSOs and youths to increase the number of measurements using the OONI Probe. Participants were encouraged to share the OONI Probe with friends, colleagues, community members, and network partners to expand network testing across Cambodia.

85 participants (54 females) participated in two training courses on iMAP, OONI, freedom of expression, digital rights, and digital security for two target groups. The first group included participants from A2I working groups and CSS partners, while the second group comprised 44 university youths. As a result, 82% of participants increased their knowledge of key concepts, rights, and freedom under the Internet freedom umbrella such as digital rights, freedom of information, the right to Internet access, and freedom from Internet censorship.

## Objective/Outcome 2: Advocate Internet Censorship And Internet Freedom In Cambodia.

### Activity 2.1: Internet Censorship Monitoring And Reporting

During the reporting period, 77 youths were selected, and two orientation meetings were conducted on the OONI running and monitoring the progress daily plan. During the reporting period, 69 youths (52 females) and NGOs were supported in installing and running the OONI Probe from July to September.

During the training, all 77 participants set up the OONI Probe and practiced running OONI. Moreover, the OONI network was created in the telegram group. As a result, at least 780 OONI running times were run in June. Then, from July to September, 69 youths (52 female) received support from the CSS project: As a result, there were 1,041,282 running times on the OONI probe.

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The key findings of the Cambodia 2024 Internet Censorship Report are based on data from July 2023 to June 2024: During this period, the Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI Probe Tools) was run 2,440,169 times, testing 1,940 websites to monitor internet censorship. Of these, 65 websites were identified as blocked, indicating either access issues or possible user-end problems. The blocked websites fell into categories such as NEWS (25), Human Rights Issues (HUMR) (4), File Sharing (File) (4), and Gambling (GMB) (1). Detailed information about these websites—including their names, periods of blocking, blocking methods, and the involved Internet Service Providers (ISPs)—is provided in Annex 1.

- ☞ Out of the 65 blocked or likely blocked websites, 29 were directly related to Cambodia. These included sites such as [www.rfa.org](http://www.rfa.org), [rfa.org](http://rfa.org), and [Cambodian.Dating](http://Cambodian.Dating), [camnews.org](http://camnews.org), [ccimcambodia.org](http://ccimcambodia.org), [ccimbodia.org](http://ccimbodia.org), [english.cambodiadaily.com](http://english.cambodiadaily.com), [humanrightsinasean.info](http://humanrightsinasean.info), [ilabsoutheastasia.org](http://ilabsoutheastasia.org), [kamnotra.io](http://kamnotra.io), [kamnotra.oi](http://kamnotra.oi), [kamnottra.io](http://kamnottra.io), [khmer.cambodiadaily.com](http://khmer.cambodiadaily.com), [monoroom.info](http://monoroom.info), [vodenglish.news](http://vodenglish.news), [vodhotnews.com](http://vodhotnews.com), [vodkhmer.news](http://vodkhmer.news), [www.PenhChetMdia.com](http://www.PenhChetMdia.com), [www.cambodiadaily.com](http://www.cambodiadaily.com), [www.camnews.org](http://www.camnews.org), [www.ccimcambodia.org](http://www.ccimcambodia.org), [www.cipl-organization.org](http://www.cipl-organization.org), [www.clccambodia.org](http://www.clccambodia.org), [www.dtn7.com](http://www.dtn7.com), [www.healthcambodia.org](http://www.healthcambodia.org), <https://vodkhmer.news/>, [www.monorom.info](http://www.monorom.info), [www.vodkhmer.news](http://www.vodkhmer.news), [www.ycc.org.kh](http://www.ycc.org.kh).
- ☞ All 65 identified websites were blocked using DNS blocking methods, with 2,440,169 measurement run times recorded across connections from 31 Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Viettel Cambodia (Metfone), a Vietnamese-owned company, was the top blocker, having blocked all the identified domains. iSeek Communications ranked second in the number of blocked websites. Other companies, such as M247 Europe SRL, Cogetel Online, Smart Axiata, WiCAM, EZECOM, and several others, also participated in blocking various websites.

During the first semester of the report (July to December 2023), 1,199,828 tests were conducted on 1,900 websites across 21 ISPs, resulting in the blocking of 64 websites, 29 of which were directly relevant to Cambodia. In the second semester (January to June 2024), 1,226,546 tests were conducted on 1,864 websites with 27 ISPs (including 21 from the first semester and three new ones), leading to 58 blocked websites, 24 of which were also relevant to Cambodia and overlapped with those blocked in the first semester.

## Activity 2.2: Organize Policy Dialogue And Participate In CSO Legal Advocacy To Expand Internet Freedoms.

To further strengthen the OONI Probe network, the Advocacy Policy Institute (API) organized a refresh of the network and prepared a consultative report for civil society organizations (CSOs) and youth activists.





វិទ្យាស្ថានគំរូមតិ និងគោលនយោបាយ  
ADVOCACY AND POLICY INSTITUTE

## ADVOCACY AND POLICY INSTITUTE

**A leading Cambodian NGO active in advocacy,  
policy influencing, capacity building,  
good governance and dialogue facilitation  
between citizens and state actors**

*The Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) is a Cambodian non-governmental organisation active in advocacy, policy influencing, good governance and civic engagement. Capacity building and dialogue facilitation are at the heart of our efforts towards democratic and sustainable development.*

*We have received widespread acclaim from both local and international organisations for our reliability, relevance and professionalism. Over a time span of almost two decades, API has helped institutionalise advocacy skills and has been striving to make local democratic and accountable governance a reality. To these ends, we have been conducting more than 300 training courses for over 10,000 participants affiliated with civil society and community-based organisations, local councils, media outlets, trade unions, Government institutions and the Cambodian Parliament.*

*API is unique in the Cambodian civil society in serving as a connector and facilitator for citizens' empowerment in their interaction with government at all levels. API has acquired first-hand experience on policy issues like access to information (A2I) through its grassroots work. Based on this vast experience, we are in the best position to make the voices of ordinary citizens count in policy-making at the national level. Here we have been trying to support government actors serve citizens according to the law and contribute to an enabling environment for citizens and civil society to express their concerns. Finally, we have been playing an important role in helping citizens understand their rights, access to information and make use of the opportunities for engagement offered by various laws and government policies.*

*Our programmes are guided by a human rights based approach. API serves all Cambodians and values the diversity of gender, sexual orientation and identity, (dis)ability, ethnicity, faith and political opinions. At the same time, we are especially committed to supporting the most disadvantaged in their efforts to make their voices heard.*

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