



# IUU Risk Intelligence

Putting Compliance First

## GLOBAL EVALUATION OF FISHERIES MONITORING CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE IN 84 COUNTRIES

---

### CAMBODIA - COUNTRY REPORT

GANAPATHIRAJU PRAMOD

IUU RISK INTELLIGENCE

*Policy Report - Volume 1 Number 1*



## SUMMARY

*This evaluation of Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance report for **Cambodia** is one of 84 such country evaluations that covers nations landing 92% of world's fish catch. Using a wide range of interviews and in-country consultations with both military and civilian agencies, the report exemplifies the best attempt by the author(s) at evaluation of MCS compliance using 12 questions derived from international fisheries laws. The twelve questions are divided into two evaluation fields, (MCS Infrastructure and Inspections). Complete details of the methods and results of this global evaluation would be published shortly through IUU Risk Intelligence website.*

*Over a five-year period, this global assessment has been subjected to several cross-checks from both regional and global MCS experts familiar with compliance aspects in the country concerned. Uncertainty in assigning each score is depicted explicitly through score range. However, the author(s) are aware that gaps may remain for some aspects. The lead author remains open at any time to comments, and revisions will be made upon submission of evidence where necessary. Throughout the report, extreme precaution has been taken to maintain confidentiality of individuals who were willing to share information but expressed an inclination to remain anonymous out of concern for their job security, and information from such sources was cited as 'anonymous' throughout the report.*

### Suggested citation:

**Pramod, G.** (2018) Cambodia – Country Report, 7 pages, In: Policing the Open Seas: Global Assessment of Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance in 84 countries, IUU Risk Intelligence - Policy Report No. 1, Canada, 840 pages.

© **Pramod Ganapathiraju**

All rights are reserved.

<https://iuriskintelligence.com/>

## CAMBODIA – COUNTRY REPORT



**FAO landings (2013):** 111,468 tonnes

**Fisheries contribution to GDP (2012):** 7.2%

**Law of the Sea (Ratification):** Signed on 7 January 1983; Not Ratified yet)

**Coastline:** 443 km

**RFMO Membership:** None

**Patrolling Agencies:** Cambodian Navy

Rank	Priority for maritime security tasks
1.	Illegal Logging
2.	Narcotics Trafficking
3.	Illegal Fishing



## SECTION 1: MCS INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Does the country have adequate surveillance infrastructure (patrol aircraft, sea based patrol vessels and coastal patrols) to effectively patrol fisheries resources within its EEZ?

Score: 2

Score Range: 2-4

Cambodia has very limited surveillance infrastructure to patrol fishery resources within its EEZ. The Navy has 11 patrol craft with a modest presence in territorial waters (Jane 2011b; Sotharith 2010; IISS 2013). However, Cambodian Navy has plans to improve surveillance through procurement of patrol boats from China (Sakhuja 2008). See Goldrick and McCaffrie (2013) for more information.

MAFF (2001b) document suggests that the Department of Fisheries-MCS Unit based in Sihanouk operates three surveillance vessels (two of steel construction and one wood) about 14-15 m in length with max.speed of 12-15 knots, which are grossly inadequate to match better-equipped foreign poaching vessels. Recently, Director General of Fisheries Administration received nine wooden and four speed-boats (Under UN-RFLP Assistance programme) for Community Fisheries (CFs) patrols to tackle illegal fishing in coastal provinces (RFLP 2012c).

2. Does the country have adequate trained officers to conduct MCS operations?

Score: 2

Score Range: 2-4

Marine fisheries enforcement is poor in Cambodia due to shortage of trained staff which in turn is further aggravated by unrestrained availability of weapons to civilians. The Department of Fisheries MCS Marine Unit based in Sihanouk employed 63 inspectors in 2001 (MAFF 2001b). No information is available on compliance or enforcement competence of these authorities in the marine fisheries sector. See FAO (2011) report for institutional reluctance by FiA to enforce trawl ban in coastal waters.

Very few FiA staff and not full time. Navy involvement is scarce, instances where Navy protects IUU vessels from VN (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

**3. Does the country have adequate management plans to monitor their fishing vessels on the high seas?**

Score: 0

Score Range: 0-0

No, such plans are reported. Many Cambodian flagged fishing vessels have been apprehended for illegal fishing in the Russian EEZ. See Gianni and Simpson (2004); Calley (2011); Anon (2013) documents for more information. Cambodia sold its ship registry rights to a South Korean company for US\$ 6 million and has virtually no control over the activities of vessels flying its flag beyond its EEZ (Hruby and Naren 2013).

**4. What proportion of fishing vessels is equipped with vessel monitoring system (VMS) to monitor their movements on a continuous basis?**

Score: 0

Score Range: 0-0

Cambodian fishing vessels are not equipped with VMS transponders while fishing in the EEZ and high seas. See Anon (2013) for more information.

**5. What percentage of fishing vessels (>20 m OAL) is monitored through onboard observers at sea (for major commercial fish stocks)?**

Score: 0

Score Range: 0-0

Cambodian fisheries laws do not require vessels to be manned with fisheries observers.

## SECTION 2: INSPECTIONS

**6. How often fishing vessels are inspected at sea (Identification by sight and boarding for inspections)?**

Score: 5

Score Range: 3-5

Limited to occasional boarding's at sea. Refer to Q.7; Goldrick and McCaffrie (2013); MoD (2006); CFA (2011) reports for more information.

Cambodia had very limited at-sea enforcement capability leading to very little surveillance each year due to ageing vessels and low defense budget. Of the

2744 cases of fishing busts in the first nine months from (Jan-Sept 2015) only 89 cases were reported at sea and the rest came from lakes and freshwater fisheries. Number of patrol missions at sea has been abysmal. This has allowed Thai and Vietnamese trawlers to poach openly without any fear of detention using lights, explosives and trawling as close as 300 metres from the shoreline. Koh Rong and Koh Rong Sanloem are most affected by illegal fishing as far as coastal islands are concerned (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2017).

**7. How often fishing vessels are scrutinized through aerial patrols?**

Score: 0

Score Range: 0-0

Available information suggests very poor monitoring of inshore and offshore fishery resources due to lack of trained manpower and aerial patrol resources. Refer Jane (2011a); MAFF (2001a); MoD (2006) and IIS (2013) documents for more information on this aspect.

Aerial patrols are not used for monitoring fishing activities in Cambodian waters. Cambodia has faced persistent problems with illegal fishing from Vietnam, Thailand and Chinese vessels. Very few illegal foreign tuna vessel(s) or trawler(s) have ever been apprehended over the past 10 years due to poor state of the patrol fleet, inaction by state agencies and corruption (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2017).

**8. How often are fishing vessels inspected at landing centers and docks for foreign and domestic vessels (Dockside monitoring)?**

Score: 0

Score Range: 0-0

Lack of landing inspections is a persistent problem for Cambodian fishing ports. Foreign fishing vessels do not use local ports docking their illegal catches in Thai and Vietnamese ports (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2015).

**9. Are there adequate plans to monitor catches in coastal areas through coastal patrols (beach patrols, small-scale fishing gear and catch inspections) on a regular basis?**

Score: 1.5

Score Range: 1-2

Enforcement statistics from Fisheries Department show that coastal patrols are grossly inadequate, with freshwater dominions under far better surveillance. Fisheries patrols at sea are not a priority for the Cambodian navy, with illegal



foreign trawlers (Vietnamese and Thai) seen fishing as close as 1 mile from shore in broad daylight (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2017).

According to regulatory and legal frameworks most gear is illegal but trawling, push netting and dynamite do most damage. There is a new generation of "super trawlers" developing, targeting juvenile demersal fish (so called trash fish) as feed for VN aquaculture industry (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

Illegal trawling in inshore waters is a persistent problem even within marine protected areas, with concrete anti-trawling devices being increasingly used to stop illegal push netters and trawlers from encroaching coastal fishing zones (Ratner 2006; RFLP 2011, 2012a,b; David 2015; Leng 2013; Krell *et al.*, 2011; Doma 2011; Leng 2013; Thorne *et al.*, 2015; Voe *et al.*, 2015; Kurien *et al.*, 2016).

**10. Are all the catches that are caught in this jurisdiction at sea accounted for (i.e., unreported Trans-shipments at sea)?**

Score: 0

Score Range: 0-0

Department of Fisheries and the Royal Cambodian Navy are not equipped with adequate patrol vessels or trained officers to undertake transshipment inspections at sea. There is very low emphasis on inspections at sea, as most patrols take place on lakes and rivers. Organized poaching is common with Cambodian law enforcement officials often colluding with Thai and Vietnamese trawlers to allow illegal fishing in coastal waters in exchange for cash and other contraband. This is also one of the main reasons for open and blatant illegal fishing by Thai and Vietnamese trawlers as close as 500 meters from the coast. There are also reports that illegal trade for even licensed national catches is one the increase as Cambodia is banned from exporting to Europe, so such catches often end up in the same overseas markets often routed through Thai and Vietnam as products of those countries. There are also reports of incidence of more Chinese trawlers in Cambodian waters (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2017).

See Anon (2013); Gianni and Simpson (2004); Calley (2011) reports on Cambodian flags of convenience vessels and their illegal operations in foreign EEZs and the high seas.

According to UNCTAD (2018) catches of industrial fishing vessels are sold by Cambodian boats to Vietnamese, Thai and Hong Kong vessels in offshore waters; so, such catches are not landed in local markets or processed at onshore seafood processing facilities leading to under-reporting of trade data.

**11. Are vessels required to undergo inspection of equipment and fishing gear for every fishing trip?**

Score: 0

Score Range: 0-0

No, there are widespread fishing net and technical equipment violations by both small-boat and offshore fishing vessels (Anon, *pers.comm.* 2016).

See Viner *et al.*, (2006); David (2015); Krell *et al.*, (2011); Thorne *et al.*, (2015); Kurien *et al.*, (2016) reports for more information.

**12. Has the country taken adequate measures to revise and implement national fisheries laws to curtail illegal fishing practices; and does it comply with national and international laws signed?**

Score: 1.5

Score Range: 1-4

Fisheries Law of 2006 is the main national legislation for fisheries management in Cambodia. The country has not reported any NPOA on IUU Fishing. Cambodia is not a party to the UN Port State Measures Agreement, UN Fish Stocks Agreement and the FAO Compliance Agreement. The country has demonstrated very poor compliance with national and international laws, so a low score is assigned in this study.

Less than 5% of the total illegal fishing cases were identified from marine waters with majority of enforcement effort concentrated in monitoring freshwater rivers and lakes (David and Dara 2017).

The country faces huge problem from illegal fishing activities of Vietnamese trawlers. From one coastal region just alone within a 3 mile stretch from shore local fishermen report 20-30 Vietnamese trawlers fishing illegally every day; one can imagine the extent of illegal fishing for the whole coastline. For the whole coastline more than 500 trawlers (Thai, Vietnamese and Occasionally Chinese) fish illegally up to 9 months in a year causing an annual loss of approximately 35,000 to 50,000 tonnes each year. Illegal trawling also takes place at night. These incursions by Vietnamese and other foreign trawlers are largely facilitated by absence of seizures from Navy and FiA, coupled with corruption and other systemic failures enabling pillaging of the Cambodian fish stocks. Left with no other choice small-scale Cambodian fishers have used destructive practices to capture smaller-sized fish customarily for subsistence needs. Entire sea grass and coral reef ecosystems have been wiped out leaving





muddy and barren ecosystems with limited chance for recovery as trawling continues unabated (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2017).

See Puthy (2007); Sotharith (2010); FAO (2011); Calley (2011); CFA (2011); Leng (2013); David (2015); Chap *et al.*, (2016); Kurien *et al.*, (2016); UNCTAD (2018) reports for more information. In 2014, Cambodia was designated as a non-cooperating third country by the European Union for failing to comply with international obligations as a flag, port and coastal state to prevent illegal unreported and unregulated fishing.

Flag of Convenience	Yes
Vessels on the RFMO - IUU vessel list	No

*Last Updated: 09 March 2019*



## Note:

Bibliography and other notes relevant to this country report including methods, results and discussion for the global evaluation of 84 countries would be released shortly through IUU Risk Intelligence website (<https://iuriskintelligence.com/>). (The author can be contacted at [pramod.raju@gmail.com](mailto:pramod.raju@gmail.com) to provide any feedback).

© Pramod Ganapathiraju

All rights are reserved.

<https://iuriskintelligence.com/>

*No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the author.*



Connect with us @ 

<https://twitter.com/iurisk>

@  **LinkedIn**

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4928027>

*Website & Report design* (<http://vjdesign.com.au>)