

## *Original Paper*

# Current Situation of Economic Life of Vietnamese Community in Cambodia: A Survey's Results

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Huy Hoang<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi, Vietnam (Note 1)

E-mail: hoangnh.iseas@gmail.com

Received: February 2, 2023      Accepted: February 10, 2023      Online Published: February 20, 2023

doi:10.22158/jetmm.v5n1p49

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/jetmm.v5n1p49>

### **Abstract**

*The Vietnamese community in Cambodia is facing a difficult and hard life in all aspects, especially since the Cambodian Government issued and implemented Decree No. 129 in August 2017 on the revocation and cancellation of Cambodian administrative documents that Cambodia deemed abnormal holding and using by foreigners. Accordingly, most Vietnamese people live in Cambodia for a long time, even for five to six generations, have been affected by the confiscation of all documents proving their legal status in Cambodia. As results of the implementation of this Decree, more than 90% of people of Vietnamese origin are considered immigrants, so they hardly enjoy any rights. Because they do not have documents to prove their legal status, people of Vietnamese origin cannot own property and means of production, have difficulty in accessing jobs, and especially their children born in Cambodia cannot go to Cambodian schools.*

*Besides, along with low education level, temporary life, no expertise, no capital and production means, a large percentage of Vietnamese people in Cambodia have extremely difficult lives. Their per capita income is much lower than the Cambodia's national average. Many of them live in poverty and vulnerability.*

*Based on the results of the survey conducted in Cambodia by the research team, this article examines and evaluates the current economic situation of the Vietnamese community in Cambodia. The findings strongly confirm the above assessment.*

### **Keywords**

*Economic Life, Vietnamese Community, Current Status, Cambodia*

## 1. Introduction

In general, the economic life of Vietnamese people in Cambodia is basically difficult with the low percentage of people having stable job and income, and lack of foundations for ensuring long-term stability. Through the study of documents in general, practical observations during the survey conducted by the research team in 2022 in particular, it can be seen that Vietnamese origin in Cambodia are low-skilled, high illiteracy rate, and do simple jobs that do not bring high income. In general, most Vietnamese in Cambodia do not have a stable profession and lack of expertise. Popular occupations of Vietnamese in Cambodia include aquaculture, fishing, agriculture, forestry, cottage industry, small household trade, repair services, servants, self-employment and a number of other unnamed occupations.

In addition, reports on the economic status of Vietnamese people in Cambodia show a common picture that the proportion of Vietnamese families without land (both for residential and for agricultural activities) is quite high. Other living conditions such as access to electricity, clean water, housing conditions, etc. are average or low compared to the country's average level. Most families have difficulty in owning means of production and having a stable livelihood. The main source of income of the people is mainly based on the occupations that they are used to, so there are low-income occupations leading to a high poverty rate among the Vietnamese in Cambodia. In order to have a complete look at the current status of economic life of Vietnamese people in Cambodia, we conducted a survey in 2022 in 8 provinces and cities include, Phnom Penh, Kandal, Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Siem Reap, Battambang, Stung Treng and Rattanakiri. The size of the survey sample is 1,200 households. The following are results of the survey on the economic life of Vietnamese people in Cambodia.

## 2. Economic Activities, Land, Occupations, Means of Production and Livelihood of Vietnamese People in Cambodia

To conduct research on the economic status of Vietnamese people in Cambodia, the questionnaire was designed in order to find out about how is the economic life of overseas Vietnamese in Cambodia. When being asked about their occupation, survey results are collected, processed and provided in Table 1 below. Among 1,200 respondents, the occupational structure clearly reveals the livelihood trend of Vietnamese people in Cambodia. Statistics in Table 1 show that the Vietnamese in Cambodia are mainly small traders, accounting for 34.51% (412 households), and hired workers, accounting for 27.14% (equivalent to 324 households). The number of households having livelihoods in agriculture, aquaculture and fishing accounts for 16.94%, equivalent to 201 households (of which, 14.49% or 173 households work in the fishing industry, and 2.23% or 28 households working in agriculture). Some other occupations such as picking up ticks and waste, driving a rental car, working as a freelancer. There are very few people stay at home due to be old (14/1200 respondents). This proves that Vietnamese people in Cambodia still have to work hard to earn for a living even when they get old.

Compared to Cambodians, Vietnamese people are quite more agile and better in trading, and in Cambodian markets, stalls of good off Vietnamese people are often better organized than those of Cambodian. These survey results are also consistent with the actual observations and reports by the Khmer - Vietnam Association in Cambodia as well as its Branches in the provinces that working as farming and fishing are not preferred by Vietnamese people here. Not many of them choose their livelihood as working in agriculture sector, but mainly doing small business, hired workers, and services.

**Table 1. Occupational Structure of Vietnamese People in Cambodia**

Occupation	Quantity (person)	Share (%)
Aquaculture and Fishing	173	14.49
Agriculture	28	2.35
Cottage industry	139	11.64
Small trader	412	34.51
Repaired service	170	14.24
Civil servant	58	4.86
Hired workers	324	27.14
Others	181	15.16

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

It is a fact that there are not many Vietnamese people in Cambodia directly engaged in agricultural activities. The nature of the job for people of Vietnamese origin also varies from provinces to provinces. For example, in the eight provinces selected for our survey, we find that households those residing in Phnom Penh and the city of Siem Reap are mainly engaged in business and small trader. Some people work as hired workers or drive motorbike taxis and tuktuk cars. In the Tonle Sap area of Kampong Thom and Siem Reap provinces, the Vietnamese mainly engage in fishing and aquaculture. As for the households in the remaining provinces such as Kandal, Kampong Cham, Rattanakiri, Stung Treng and Battambang, most of them work as wage earners, services, scrapyards or daily income jobs. Because the educational level of Vietnamese people is basically low, the jobs they do often earn them low wages. Therefore, their lives are always precarious and uncertain.

Regarding ownership of arable land and means of production, and livelihoods of Vietnamese people in Cambodia, when being asked whether they own arable land, the survey results are listed and provided in Table 2 below. Among the respondents, 78% (936) of the surveyed households live in rural areas. Among them, just over 12.5% of households cited that they have land for production activities and livestock. This result is completely consistent with the reality of the economic status of the Vietnamese in Cambodia because at present, only those who have Cambodian nationality can carry out procedures

related to ownership of production land and residential land, and owning assets that are considered as production tools. However, when calculating based on a total of 201 households earning their living mainly by activities in agriculture and fishery, up to 58.21% of households responded that they have arable land and aquaculture, while 41.79% of households do not have arable land. It means there are only about 116 households having arable land. This is a small number compared to the size of sample chosen for the survey, further proving that Vietnamese people are now facing many difficulties in their lives in Cambodia.

**Table 2. Ownership of Arable Land and Means of Production**

Yes or No	Quantity (household)	Share (%)
Yes	117	12.50/58.21
No	819/84	87.50/41.79
	<b>936/201</b>	<b>100/100</b>

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

The reason for not having ownership rights to arable land, through practical research and observation, we found that basically Vietnamese people in Cambodia are poor. Besides, most of them do not have legal status in the country, so they are not allowed to own property according to the regulations and policies of the Cambodian government because they do not have documents to prove Cambodian nationality. To reinforce those statements, when being asked about what is the reason of not having arable land, up to 86.03% of Vietnamese households in the study area responded that they have never had agricultural land because they did not have money to buy it. And about 12.8% of the respondents are cited that they are not allowed to own land, because they did not have legal documents to prove their nationality status. Thus, these households have not been officially recognized in Cambodia by law. Meanwhile, only 0.24% of the respondents said that they had arable land before but it was confiscated by the local government, and 2.04% of the respondents said that they had arable land before, but they have sold it for other purposes due to lack of money (Table 3).

**Table 3. Reason for not Having Owned Arable Land**

Reason	Quantity (household)	Share (%)
Never have had before because they don't have money	704	86.03
Used to have, but now have sold	17	2.04
Have been confiscated by the local government	2	0.24
Other reason (not eligible to own land)	96	11.69

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

About the situation of owning different types of means of production, the survey's results provided in Table 4 show that, for households those engaged in fishing activities, the means for their production that they have most are boats, small ship, and fishing rafts. They belong to the group living the floating village in Tonle Sap and on the banks of the Mekong River. For those doing handicrafts, there are 139 out of 147 households own machines for production activities, and for households working in agricultural sector, there are only a few of them have owned agriculture machinery (only 6 out of 28 households).

**Table 4. Situation of Owning Mean of Production by Vietnamese Households in Cambodia**

<b>Means of production</b>	<b>Share (%)</b>
Agricultural machine	1.72
Machines in production of handicrafts	39.83
Boats, small ship, and fishing rafts	56.45
Other fishing tools (e.g. net, fishing rod, etc.)	39.83

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

### **3. About Conditions for Economic Activities of Vietnamese Community in Cambodia**

By conducting desk research and practical observations while doing field work in Vietnamese communities in Cambodia in the study localities, we found that basically people of Vietnamese origin living in Cambodia are currently facing certainly difficult conditions for their economic activities to varying degrees. The households, those living in the big cities (like Phnom Penh, downtown of Siem Reap and other provincial cities) usually enjoy more favorable conditions for their economic activities. But for households, those residing in rural, especially in remote area, have to face harsh and difficult conditions. When being asked to rate the degree of convenience or difficulty in economic activities and doing business in Cambodia, the results are summarized and provided in Table 5 showing that only 11.89% of respondents said that they enjoy advantages, and up to 41.79% of the respondents rated that they are facing difficulties. This finding does not seem to fully reflect the reality of difficulties faced by Vietnamese people in Cambodia due to the impact of the problem that most of them do not have their legal status recognized. The reason may be that the sample selected for the survey falls into the group of people with a proportion of households having difficulty in livelihood activities in Cambodia.

**Table 5. Advantages and Difficulties in Economic Activities Facing Vietnamese Households Living in Cambodia**

Conditions	Quantity (hhs)	Share (%)
Advantage	142	11.89
Difficulty	499	41.79
Normal	540	45.23
No opinion	13	1.09

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

As for the households that they have advantages or relatively favorable condition in economic activities doing in Cambodia, through the research, we found that they are the households having Cambodian nationality and develop a good relationship with local authorities (accounting for more than 82% of the respondents or 88 out of 142 households answered they enjoy favorable condition doing economic activities in Cambodia). The remaining are households saying they got support from the Cambodian government either for arable land (1.92% or 2 households); capital (7.69% or 8 households), means of production (3.85% or 4 households); or other support policies (14.42% or 15 households). These statistics reveal that only a small proportion of Vietnamese households got supports from Cambodian government. This result is quite compatible with the fact that Vietnamese people are often discriminated against in their daily lives by Cambodian authorities.

To be more specific about the difficulty that Vietnamese people in Cambodia face, the survey results are summarized and recorded in Table 6 bellow. Statistics provided in the Table show that the biggest difficulty facing Vietnamese households' economic activities is the situation of shortage of production capital (accounting for 55.17%), followed by the lack of legal documents for their legal status such as household registration, identification, citizenship certificate (accounting for 52.13%), difficulties caused by diseases and pandemic (accounting for 44.62%) and difficulties due to lack of land for living and farming (accounting for 40.16%). It can be said that, in terms of endogeneity, the lack of basic input resources (capital) for production and business is the main difficulty facing most Vietnamese households, but the exogenous effects from their unrecognized legal status and difficulties raised by the authorities are the factors that are difficult to adjust because Cambodia has discriminatory policies and behaviors towards people of Vietnamese origin. Because of not having nationality status, it is difficult for most of people of Vietnamese origin in Cambodia to solve these setbacks caused by lack of capital for production in the short term, so Vietnamese people in Cambodia continue to face difficulties.

**Table 6. Types of Difficulties Facing Vietnamese Households in Cambodia**

Types of difficulties	Quantity (household)	Share (%)
Lack of arable land	198	40.16
Lack of production means	122	24.75
Lack of capital	272	55.17
Inappropriate in government policies	128	25.96
Difficulties raised by local authorities	83	16.84
Lack of legal documents	257	52.13
Disadvantage weather (drought/flood)	75	15.21
Limited academic and professional qualification	161	32.66
Disease and pandemic	220	44.62
Other	36	7.3

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

#### 4. About Housing and Living Conditions

Based on our research and observations, the housing and living conditions of most Vietnamese people in Cambodia are not good. There are still many household living in remote rural areas facing a shortage of housing or living in temporary, insecure houses. Access to electricity and clean water is also very difficult.

Regarding housing condition, the survey's results on the housing situation of Vietnamese people in Cambodia provided in Table 7 show that there are still about 7.6% (91) households of Vietnamese people in Cambodia do not have a house, 15.42% (185) households live in temporary houses built by using bamboo and thatch (literally, they do not have houses because these temporary houses are built on public or borrowed land). There still 14.66% (176) households live on boats, small ship or fishing rafts. Thus, there are up to 30.83% of Vietnamese households in Cambodia in the study areas currently face many difficulties in housing and accommodation, especially those who have not had a house or live in temporary houses built on borrowed land, and some family are currently still living on boats, small ship or rafts. So, when the Cambodian government has ordered to relocate people on floating villages in Tonle Sap and rivers, they would face a situation of homelessness without any support from the government. Although the ordinance does not specifically target any community living on the floating hamlets, it is clear that people of Vietnamese origin are most affected because they are landless and have a long tradition of living in floating hamlets on the Mekong river and Tonle Sap (Note 2). Besides, through interviews, we know that, unlike people of Vietnamese origin, Cham and Khmer people got supported financially and land by Cambodian government when they are relocated from floating village to inland living. At the peak of the Covid-19 epidemic in 2021, the Cambodian government still imposed a forced relocation order for Vietnamese people. On the afternoon of June 11,

2022, Cambodian police came to cut ropes and break fish rafts of many households living in Rusey Keo and Meanchey districts, the incident made many other households very worried (Note 3).

**Table 7. Housing Condition**

Type of house	Quantity (Household)	Share (%)
Temporary house (bamboo and thatch)	185	15.42
Solid wooden house	262	21.83
Multi-story house, concrete house	444	37.00
Stilt house	42	3.50
Boats, small ship or fishing rafts	176	14.67
Do not have a house	91	7.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

About the living conditions, according to the survey results provided in Table 8 below, up to 86.17% of Vietnamese households in the survey area are able to access to the electricity system. For households those are not able to access to electricity (accounting for 13.83%), it is mainly due to the objective reasons such as there is no electricity grid in the region or they are in economic difficulties. More specifically, out of 166 households without accessing to electricity, there are 68 households (accounting for 46.85%) living in areas that do not have an electricity grid; 11.19% or about 16 households said they do not have money to pay for the installation of the electricity network to connect their home to the electricity system; and 55 (accounting for 38.46%) households live in areas with a grid, but some of those households are far away from the system's lines, and some households do not have legal documents to carry out traction procedures (Table 9). This is considered to be one of the basic and important indicators reflecting the level of difficulty in daily life and economic status of Vietnamese people in Cambodia, affecting their basic needs which have not yet been fully met. Therefore, the Vietnamese community is still considered to be the poorest expat community in Cambodia.

**Table 8. Situation of Accessibility to Electricity**

	Quantity (household)	Share (%)
Yes	1,034	86.17
No	166	13.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022



**Table 9. Reason for not be Able to Access to Electricity**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Quantity (hhs)</b>	<b>Share (%)</b>
No electricity grid in the area they live	68	46.85
Far away from electricity system	55	38.46
No legal document to carry out traction procedures	2	1.40
In situation of economic difficulty	16	11.19
Other	25	17.48
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

Like housing conditions and accessibility to electricity, the survey results in Table 10 also show that more than 70.5% of households in the study area have access to clean water for daily life. Most of these households reside in city (Phnom Penh) and provincial town. The rest, 14.4% of households still use spring and streamlet water, river water, pond water, lake water that is not hygienic for daily lives, especially the households living in the area of Tonle Sap and nearby rivers. Nearly 14% of households use water from a borehole, which is also believe to not meet sanitary standards. Therefore, nearly 30% of households in the survey area as of October 2022 were still not be able to access to clean water.

**Table 10. Water Sources and Share of Households**

<b>Water source</b>	<b>Quantity (hhs)</b>	<b>Share (%)</b>
Tap water	828	70.53
Water from borehole	164	13.96
Water from springs, streamlet, river, pond and lake	169	14.40
Rain water	13	1.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

## 5. On Household Income and Poverty

Results of the survey on the income level of Vietnamese household in Cambodia in our study sample provided in Table 11 shows that the average income is not low. However, the difference between the highest income and the lowest income quintile is very much, and depends a lot on their occupations and livelihoods. Meanwhile, the number of people with low and very low incomes accounts for a very high percentage. For households those are doing business, having factories or farms, the income is very high (the highest is up to 117,907 USD/household/year, or nearly 30,000 USD per capita) and possibly rich in Cambodia. However, the number of households in this category in the survey is very small, only 1 household. Besides, the number of Vietnamese people who do not have a main occupation makes up

the vast majority and they are low-income groups with precarious lives, with an average income of only about 490 USD/year/households, which is about 130 USD/person/year. This level is very low compared to the Cambodia national average (about 1,625 USD in 2021).

**Table 11. Yearly Household Income (2021)**

Yearly income	Max	Min	Mean
Yearly household income estimate (riel)	480,000,000 (117,907 USD)	2,000,000 (490 USD)	35,200,000 (8,650 USD)
Yearly per capita income estimate (riel)	120,000,000 (29,477 USD)	500,000 (130 USD)	12,900,000 (3,169 USD)

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

Regarding poverty, the survey results in Table 12 show that the poverty incidence among Vietnamese people in Cambodia is very high as 45.74% of the respondents are classified as living below the poverty line and only 6.77% (81 households) are in the well-off level. Remaining 47.49% of respondents are reported to live at the normal level, just slightly above the poverty line and are very likely to fall into the poor group if they experience shock such as illness, disease or natural disasters. Specifically, with Cambodia's new national poverty line according to October 2022 data of 10,951 riel per person per day (equivalent to 2.7 USD), the number of poor people among the Vietnamese community is 45.74% too high compared to the national poverty rate determined by this new poverty line (17.8%) (Note 4). This data is real evidence to support the conclusions about the difficulties of the Vietnamese people in Cambodia today.

**Table 12. Classification of Households by Poverty Status**

Criteria	Quantity (hhs)	Share (%)
Poor (in poverty)	547	45.74
Above poverty	568	47.49
Well-off	81	6.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,196</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

Regarding the causes of poverty, the respondents' responses are listed in Table 13, citing that the main reason causing poverty among Vietnamese community in Cambodia is that Vietnamese people do not have legal documents, so it is difficult for them to find for jobs and suitable livelihoods, and do not have the opportunity to access loans for doing economic activities and business. Therefore, employment, capital for production and business, ownership of assets as means of production and

legality are the main barriers preventing Vietnamese people from having stable jobs. More specifically, among the respondents, 77.9% answered that they did not have a stable job, 50.29% answered that poverty was caused by a lack of capital for production and business and 40.95% do not have legal documents, so they are hindered in finding a job or doing business. The issue of education or expertise is not the main barrier because the job characteristics of most Vietnamese in Cambodia are not associated higher qualifications but are mainly manual labor, providing services, hired work or doing small trading. However, Notice No. 360/19 issued and implemented by the Cambodian Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training dated August 28, 2019, on Determination of Categories of Occupations and Jobs Prohibited for Foreigners (Note 5) that has strongly affected the group of Vietnamese here because most Vietnamese are classified as foreigners (more than 86%) so they are not allowed to practice those occupations and jobs, which are said to be their strong advantages.

**Table 13. Causes of Poverty among Vietnam Households in Cambodia**

Causes	Quantity (hhs)	Share (%)
No stable jobs	409	77.9
No qualification and profession	145	27.62
Lack of capital	264	50.29
Lack of means for production	66	12.57
No supports from local authorities/troublesome by local authorities	72	13.71
No legal documents	215	40.95
No integration with locality	31	5.9
Others (National disaster, diseases and pandemic)	49	9.33

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

As mentioned and discussed above, due to the strong reaction of the expatriate community to the implementation of Decree 129 of the Government of Cambodia and a number of other regulations such as Notice 360/19, it has adversely affected the legal status and economic condition of foreigners living in Cambodia because all of their papers were confiscated. So recently, the Cambodian Government has issued regulations on re-issuance of documents for foreigners, certificates for foreigners. Thereby, more than 86% of Vietnamese in the study area have been granted foreigner card (yellow card). For that reason, we asked if there was any change in the income level and living conditions of people now (2022) compared to the time when their legal documents were revoked (after 2017). The results are calculated, statistically and provided in Table 14 below. From the data in the Table, it can be seen that compared to the time before the documents were confiscated, most people did not see a positive change. Only 3.17% of the respondents said that they saw their life was much better while 33.25% rated it worse and 40.08% said there was no change. However, this result cannot be said to be accurate because

it has only been a few months since Cambodia issued a notice to re-issue the yellow card to Vietnamese people as foreigner ling in Cambodia, so it has not been able to have a immediately changeable impact on their economic lives.

**Table 14. Changes in Household Economic Status in 2022 Compared to 2017**

Changes	Quantity (hhs)	Share (%)
Much better	38	3,17
Rather better	166	13,83
Unchanged	481	40,08
Much worse off	399	33,25
Worse off	116	9,67
No opinion	38	3,17

*Source:* Calculated from the Survey by the research team, 2022

## 6. Discussion and Concluding Remark

Through above field study results, it can be seen that the economic life of most Vietnamese people in Cambodia is in extreme difficulty. Homeless, low incomes, high poverty rates and poor access to basic services are quite prevalence among Vietnamese community in Cambodia. The lack of stability and uncertainty in the economic life of the Vietnamese Community in Cambodia is quite common due to the following main reasons.

**First**, as we have known, the legal status of Vietnamese people in Cambodia is very precarious when most of them have not yet enjoyed citizenship status in Cambodia because they don't have Cambodian nationality. Particularly, after Decree No. 129 was issued and implemented in August 2017, many people of Vietnamese origin used to have identity cards, voter cards and other documents certifying their Cambodian nationality were also confiscated by the Cambodian government. In addition, they are discriminated against in Cambodian society. The lack of legal status is the root cause of the instability in their economic life such as the insecurity and uncertainty of owning land, housing, property, and accessibility to occupation and employment. Because only when their citizenship is recognized, according to Cambodia's policies and regulations, they may have the rights to owning properties such as land, houses, property, vehicles, etc., and they have a right to access to education for a better professional careers. As a result, they may have opportunity to access to jobs and employments in the Cambodian economy or companies.

**Second**, the economic activities of the Vietnamese in Cambodia are individual, isolated, and do not have a stable and long-term binding relationship with the local Cambodian people, so they hardly got any support and cooperation from authority and local community. The individuality and isolation is reflected in the fact that the Vietnamese in Cambodia often live in separate residential clusters,

separating from the local people living along Mekong rivers or the Tonle Sap area (on the shore or on floating villages) with the main job of fishing or they live in derelict riverside lands, vacant lands in some suburbs of the capital Phnom Penh or provincial cities with the main jobs of hired work, simple services and junk job. That form of residence comes from the unstable legal status, which is not guaranteed and is always threatened by the Cambodian government. With such unstable settlement patterns in suburban areas or vacant land, it also affects the occupation and livelihood of Vietnamese people here when their occupation is mainly small trade, junk job and hired work, working in agriculture, aquaculture and fishing.

**Third**, because they are not recognized as Cambodian citizens, most Vietnamese in Cambodia lack both a stable economic foundation or the opportunity to own assets and means of production to serve the family's economic life. For example, it is arable land and agricultural machinery in agriculture; accessibility to capital and business registration in trade and production; the license to practice fishing and purchase ships and boats in fishing; and in service professions there is also a license to practice and a condition to access those professions. However, because Cambodia's new regulations impose some conditions, restrictions and prohibitions, people of Vietnamese origin cannot meet the requirements to be eligible to work in those fields. These facts help the research team to better explain the socio-economic life of Cambodians of Vietnamese origin, which is always in a state of instability, lacking a basis for economic development as well as improving the quality of life.

**Fourth**, Vietnamese people are facing difficulties in participating some of their traditional occupations as their strengths after the Cambodian government issued and implemented Decree 129 and on August 28, 2019 the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training of Cambodia issued Notice No. 360/19, promulgating regulations prohibiting foreigners from doing 10 occupations (Note 6). Although this Notice does not specify people from which country they are alien, its subjects are mainly of Vietnamese origin. These are the professions in which the Vietnamese have strengths and advantages, and have been considered as their livelihood for many generations in Cambodia. Thus, after Cambodia implemented Notice 360/19, the economic life of the Vietnamese community in Cambodia, which was already precarious and poor, became more and more difficult and precarious.

## References

- Ate Hekstra, & Meta Kong. (2015). Vietnamese in Cambodia: Stateless, discriminated and in fear of deportation. *LICAS NEWS*, 15 September 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.licas.news/2020/09/15/vietnamese-incambodia-stateless-discriminated-and-in-fear-of-deportation/>
- Ben Mauk. (2018). A People in Limbo, Many Living Entirely on the Water. *The New York Times Magazine*, 28 March 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/03/28/magazine/cambodiapersecuted-minority-water-refuge.html>

- Cambodia Ministry of Interior: Sub-decree 129 (August 15, 2017) on the “cancellation and revocation of irregular documents used by foreigners living in Cambodia”.
- Cambodia: Law on Immigration of 1994. Retrieved from <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b52f8.html>
- Cambodia: Law on Nationality of 1996. Retrieved from [https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/acc\\_e/khm\\_e/wtacckhm3a3\\_leg\\_37.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/khm_e/wtacckhm3a3_leg_37.pdf)
- Cambodia’ Ministry of Interior: Parkas No. 2181 on issuance of permanent residence cards to foreign immigrants to Cambodia.
- Cambodia’s Ministry of Interior, Parkas No. 5671/TB-BNV dated on July 01, 2019 on Termination of the Application for Immigrant Foreign National and Permanent Residence Card.
- Cambodia’s Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training: Notice No. 360/19 (August 28, 2019) on Categories the types of job that prohibits foreigners in doing business in Cambodia. Retrieved from <https://opendevelopmentcambodia.net/announcements/directive-to-determine-categories-of-job-and-ban-foreign-nationals-from-self-employment/>, in Khmer language.
- Christoph Sperfeldt. (2020). Minorities and statelessness: Social exclusion and citizenship in Cambodia. *International Journal On Minority And Group Rights*, 27(1), 94-120.
- Điều lệ Hội Khmer - Việt Nam tại Campuchia năm 2022 (Charter of Khmer - Vietnam Association in Cambodia in 2022).
- General Department of Immigration, Foreigner Deportation Statistics, 2015-2022. Kheang Un’s personal communication.
- Heng Kimkong. (2022). Cambodia-Vietnam Relations: Key Issues and The Way Forward. *ISEAS Perspective*, 36. Retrieved from <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/iseasperspective/2022-36-cambodia-vietnam-relations-key-issues-and-the-way-forward-by-kimkong-heng/>
- Hoang Minh Vu. (2018). Vietnam’s Near Abroad? Vietnam-Cambodia Relations in Historical and Regional Perspective, 1975-present. *Paper presented at the Annual Association of Asian Studies*, March 2019.
- Minority Rights Group International, Cambodia: Ethnic Vietnamese. Retrieved from <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/ethnic-vietnamese/>
- Ramses Amer. (1994). The Ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia: A Minority at Risk? *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 16(2), 214.
- Statelessness and legal identity issues among ethnic Vietnamese minority populations in Cambodia. Retrieved from [https://law.unimelb.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/3396445/MIRO-and-Peter-McMullin-Centre-on-Statelessness-Submission-on-Minorities-in-Cambodia-11-May-2018.pdf](https://law.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/3396445/MIRO-and-Peter-McMullin-Centre-on-Statelessness-Submission-on-Minorities-in-Cambodia-11-May-2018.pdf)

## Notes

Note 1. The article is excerpted from the content of the research project (Code: ĐL.XH-03/20) on Vietnamese Community in Cambodia, led by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Huy Hoang, Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Note 2. The Cambodian government has repeatedly evicted communities living in floating villages on lakes and rivers, but did not provide shelter, so most of the group became homeless.

Note 3. Notes from the reporter of Tuoi Tre newspaper (2021), at <https://tuoitre.vn/nguoi-goc-viet-o-campuchia-bat-dau-di-doi-khoi-song-tonle-sap-20210612212010147.htm>, accessed on February 1, 2023.

Note 4. Khmer Times. at [https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50973518/cambodias-poverty-line-updated-178-percent-cambodians-under-the-poverty-line/?\\_\\_cf\\_chl\\_tk=BwM2KiMosmiO8GX8rp.Jhhrcx0RYwcw486XcrWFF7A-1676862286-0-gaNycGzNCvs](https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50973518/cambodias-poverty-line-updated-178-percent-cambodians-under-the-poverty-line/?__cf_chl_tk=BwM2KiMosmiO8GX8rp.Jhhrcx0RYwcw486XcrWFF7A-1676862286-0-gaNycGzNCvs), accessed on 20 October 2022.

Note 5. According to the notice, prohibited occupations include: 1) Driving commercial vehicles such as two-wheelers, three-wheelers, two-wheelers pulling trailers, four-wheel motorcycles, driving passenger and cargo vehicles ; 2) Peddling in public places; 3) Massage, reflexology; 4) Do the head; 5) Making and repairing shoes and sandals; 6) Sewing; 7) Car repair; 8) Producing Khmer souvenirs; 9) Producing Khmer musical instruments; 10) Jewelers.

Note 6. Ibid.