



ក្រសួងមហាផ្ទៃ
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR



PRESS RELEASE

Government and UNICEF Launch National Campaigns to Prevent Child Injuries

The Royal Government of Cambodia, supported by UNICEF and partners, is launching two national campaigns to prevent child deaths from road crashes and drowning, two of the leading causes of death among children and youth in Cambodia.

PHNOM PENH, 20 October 2025 – Currently, road traffic injuries and drowning are two of the leading causes of child mortality in Cambodia, claiming the lives of thousands of children every year. With the support of UNICEF and partners, the Royal Government of Cambodia has launched a joint campaign to protect children's lives from these preventable tragedies.

In 2023 alone, road crashes killed 1,590 people—an average of five deaths per day—and injured more than 4,500, with children and young people paying the heaviest price¹. Worldwide, road traffic injuries are the leading killer of young people aged 15–19². Cambodia is among the top third of countries in East Asia and the Pacific with the highest road traffic deaths for children and adolescents³.

At the same time, Cambodia faces a critical public health challenge with childhood drowning, which claims the lives of 1,300 people annually. The country's drowning rate stands at 7.6 per 100,000 people, which is nearly double the regional average and more than twice the global rate. Drowning is the leading cause of death for children aged 5–14 in Cambodia⁴.

H.E. Abhisit Bandit Sar Sokha, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, said:

“Climate change is increasing these risks: more intense and frequent monsoon rainfall is causing severe flooding, which puts children at a higher risk of drowning, while extreme weather events increase the risk of road traffic injuries.”

“Every child has the right to grow up in a safe environment. Yet every day in Cambodia, children are killed or injured in ways we know how to prevent,” said Dr Will Parks, UNICEF Representative to Cambodia.

¹ Report on Road Traffic Casualties and Accidents, National Road Safety Committee (NRSC), 2023

² [Road Safety Cambodia Country Profile, WHO, 2023](#)

³ In 2019, Cambodia ranked 8th out of 27 countries in East Asia and the Pacific for road traffic deaths among children and adolescents under 20. [Child and Adolescent Road Safety in East Asia and Pacific Nations, UNICEF, 2019](#)

⁴ [Global Status Report on Drowning Prevention, WHO, 2024](#)

“Whether it’s by wearing a helmet properly, slowing down near schools, teaching children to swim, or raising awareness about water safety, the solutions are clear. Together, we can and must stop these preventable tragedies by driving transformative change and placing child injury prevention at the very heart of community action, policy, and public awareness,” he added.

To tackle the growing crisis of child injuries, the Royal Government of Cambodia—through the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, the National Road Safety Committee, and the Ministry of Health—is joining forces with UNICEF and key partners to make prevention a national priority.

Making Roads Safer for Children

- Efforts are underway to create Safe School Zones in selected areas. These zones feature speed limits (30 km/h), pedestrian crossings, traffic signs, and safer drop-off areas, improvements which are paired with practical road safety education for students, teachers, parents, and local authorities. Public awareness campaigns reinforce safe behaviours and reach families nationwide.
- At the national level, new guidelines are being developed to set safety standards around schools. Key ministries are collaborating to strengthen enforcement of traffic laws, including the National Road Safety Committee (NRSC), Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT), Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), and the National Police. These interventions include mandatory helmet use and penalties for dangerous driving.

Preventing Drowning

- In high-risk communities, children are learning skills in survival swimming and water safety, while caregivers receive guidance on supervising children near rivers, ponds, and flood zones. These programmes are designed to be low-cost, locally driven, and scalable across Cambodia.
- At the policy level, the Government is launching the country’s first National Strategic Plan on Drowning Prevention (2025–2030) and empowering local authorities to integrate water safety into their planning and budgeting. Public awareness campaigns are also helping families understand how to keep children safe around rivers, ponds, and flood zones.

Campaign materials—including posters, billboards, TV spots, and social media content—are available for download and ready to use: <https://unicef.link/43aFDXx>

Key partners include the World Health Organization, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), UNICEF France, Hile Teuk Kampuchea, HelpCode, Swim Cambodia, and the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation. We are also grateful for the support of our donors: Michelin, contributing to road safety initiatives; and RNLI and the Princess Charlene of Monaco Foundation, both vital in our drowning prevention efforts.

For more information on child injury prevention, visit:

Road safety: <https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/urgent-need-child-road-safety> and

Drowning prevention: <https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/every-second-counts-stopping-child-drowning-cambodia>

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