



Workers urge Angkor boycott

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Thousands of flyers calling for a boycott of Angkor beer were handed out to passers-by yesterday in front of the head office of the company that owns the brand, Cambrew Ltd, as a strike by women who promote the beer in restaurants and nightspots entered its second day.

More than 30 women who handed out flyers to occupants of passing vehicles in the capital's Norodom Boulevard warned that they would start protesting at beer gardens tomorrow if the company did not double the rate of pay they receive for working on Sundays from US\$2 to \$4.



Photo by: Meng Kimlong

An Angkor beer promoter passes out leaflets to passers-by during a small protest in front of the company's office on Norodom Boulevard yesterday in Phnom Penh.

The Cambodian Food Service Workers' Federation also began urging national and international NGOs to support the strikers by lobbying Carlsberg, which owns 50 percent of Cambrew, to ensure a fair settlement to the dispute.

In a statement, the federation said Cambrew and Carlsberg had been breaking the law and exploiting the women who promote their brands for 14 years: for as long as the country's labour laws have required overtime pay. Cambrew had ignored a July 7 Arbitration Council ruling that said it was obligated to pay its beer promoters double time on Sundays, the federation said.

Orn Norn, an official with the Arbitration Council, said that the council could do no more.

"If one side does not agree with the order, the other side has a right to protest," he said.

Khiev Savuth, deputy director of Labour Ministry's Department of Dispute Resolution said the case was not his responsibility. Sarin Denora, a lawyer for Cambrew, continued to decline to comment.

Chorn Sokha, a programme officer at the Community Legal Education Centre, said most beer sellers were too afraid of losing their jobs to strike.

"No one at the company bothers to listen to them and they are not used to speaking up," she said.