Expression still limited in Cambodia: forum

Written by Chrann Chamroeun
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AN annual Asia-wide lecture tour promoting freedom of expression touched down Monday in Phnom Penh, providing students and journalists with a chance to compare levels of expression in their home country with those across Asia and Europe.

The lecture series, titled "Perspectives on Freedom of Expression in Asia and Europe", is sponsored by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in partnership with the Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (CCHR), and kicked off in Bangkok. It will travel to Vientiane, Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur.

CCHR Director Ou Virak said he was optimistic the lecture would spark change.

"Freedom of expression in Cambodia today is still limited, as media organisations in print, TV or radio who don't support the government line are often closed or threatened," he said.

"I hope that with the support of Asean members and the European Union, freedom of expression in Cambodia can develop and become broader."

Eye-opening

Yim Amrint Sourkear, a third-year accounting student at the Institution of Vanda, said that the lectures had startled her by exposing the limitations of expression in Cambodia. "I find out that freedom of expression in Cambodia is still very limited," she said.

Ou Virak said the ongoing objectives was to discuss freedom of expression through public forums, rural conferences and school programs.

"We want people to understand their right to express their own opinion," he said.