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Cambodian Center for Human Rights

**CCHR Human Rights Defender Alert – Phnom Penh, 10 November 2018**

**NGO workers and community members received summonses to appear at Preah Vihear Provincial Court**

**Date of the incident:** 5 November 2018  
**Names:** Poek Sophorn, Lut Sang, and four Prame commune's community members  
**Category of HRD:** NGO workers and Land rights activists  
**Location:** Prame commune, Tbaeng Mean Chey District, Preah Vihear Province  
**Nature of threat:** Intimidation and harassment through the use of criminal charges

On Monday 5 November 2018, Mr. Poek Sophorn, a staff member of non-governmental organization [Ponlok Khmer](#), was presented with a summons to appear for questioning at the Preah Vihear Provincial Court on 14 November 2018, over charges of being an accomplice to [arrest, detention and unlawful confinement](#) (Articles 29 and 253 of the Criminal Code of the Kingdom of Cambodia). According to the information contained in the summons, the charges relate to events which took place back in 29 December 2014 in Prame commune, Tbaeng Mean Chey district, Preah Vihear province. No further details are provided in the summons, which contravenes Mr. Sophorn's right to know the charges against him. The summons did not contain the correct family name and personal details of Mr. Sophorn, who declined to accept the summons and asked the police to bring it back to the Court for corrections. On the same day, Mr. Lut Sang, another Ponlok Khmer worker, was informed that the local police tried to deliver a summons to him as well. He was on field mission at the time and therefore has not received the summons. He is unaware of the charges associated with this summons.

Ponlok Khmer is a small NGO based in Preah Vihear province, that works to promote sustainable development and the protection of Cambodia's natural resources, including by empowering vulnerable and indigenous people to ensure the protection of their rights.

In addition, at least four community members from the Kui indigenous group in Prame commune also received summonses on 5 November 2018 to appear at the Provincial Court on the same day as Mr. Sophorn. They are summonsed over charges of arrest, detention and unlawful confinement (Article 253 of the Criminal Code) in relation to acts allegedly committed on 29 December 2014 in Prame commune. It has been reported that a total of ten community members received the said-summonses, however CCHR was only able to see four of them.

Since 2012, the commune of Prame has been the theatre of [a land dispute](#) involving the local Kui indigenous community and two companies, Lan Feng and Ruy Feng in relation to two economic land concessions attributed in 2011 for the purposes of growing rubber, acacia and sugar cane, and located on the Kui indigenous community's ancestral land. On 29 December 2014, bulldozers came to clear out the farmlands of the villagers for the ELC. The villagers, who have been awaiting a resolution to the land dispute, stopped the bulldozers in an effort to attract the attention of the authorities and the companies and to resume negotiations for a dispute resolution. In the absence of any reaction, on 30 December, the villagers pressured the bulldozer drivers to drive back to Prame commune, to meet with the authorities. The bulldozers' drivers left with the authorities on that day. As no resolution was found, the community members refused for the bulldozers to be taken away. The bulldozers were kept at the commune office till 2017, where they were reportedly taken away by the authorities as evidence for further proceedings.

Mr. Lut Sang and several community members have already summoned for questioning over the 29 December 2014 events, back in June 2015, in relation to charges of arrest, detention and unlawful confinement. Since no further development occurred since, they believed that the case had been closed.

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