

Case Brief: Paris Peace Agreement Activists

In late July 2024, three Paris Peace Agreement (“PPA”) activists **Srun Sorn, Pheung Sophea, and San Sith** were arrested by the Siem Reap Provincial Police. The three were part of a group travelling around the country to raise awareness amongst communities about the importance of the PPA, constitutional law, and encouraging active citizenship. The arrest was carried out in response to a video posted on the PPA group’s Facebook page earlier that morning, in which Pheung Sophea and Srun Sorn discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area (CLV-DTA) cooperation agreement. The video clip was from a one-hour livestream the activists had done on 21 July, in which they received questions from the public about the CLV-DTA. The National Police spokesperson publicly announced their arrest, following which the former Prime Minister went live on Facebook and discussed their arrest. He stated, “I ask the court, if there was a conviction, it should be a maximum sentence”. It is worth noting that at this point, the three PPA activists had not yet been charged. Their arrest was the first of what was to be a broad wave of arrests of more than 80 people in the following weeks, in relation to their expression of their opinions on the CLV-DTA. The three are among 37 individuals charged with “incitement to disturb social security”, a charge that carries a potential prison sentence of six-month to two years. There have been several hearings in their case, with the last one taking place in February 2026. This Case Brief provides a timeline for their case to date.

Case chronology

23 July 2024:

At approximately 9:30am, Srun Sorn, Pheung Sophea, and San Sith were arrested by the Siem Reap Provincial Police in response to the video they discussed about CLV-DTA.

24 July 2024:

Srun Sorn, Pheung Sophea, and San Sith appeared before the Phnom Penh Municipal Court, and were charged with “incitement to disturb social security” (Articles 494 & 495, Criminal Code). All three were placed in pre-trial detention. Srun Sorn is detained in Correctional Center 3 (CC3), San Sith is in Correctional Center 1 (CC1) and Pheung Sophea is in Correctional Center 2 (CC2)

29 August 2024:

The Phnom Penh Municipal Court denied the bail request submitted for the three activists. The reasons cited for this decision were: to stop the offense or prevent the offense from happening again, to prevent them from escaping, and to maintain public order.

9 October 2024:

The Phnom Penh Appeal Court upheld the decision to deny bail to Srun Sorn, Pheung Sophea and San Sith.

11 November 2024:

The Phnom Penh Municipal Court issued a closing order, sending the case to be tried.

25 November 2024:

The Supreme Court upheld the denial of the activists' bail request by the lower courts.

24 December 2024:

The trial of Srun Sorn, Pheung Sophea, San Sith and 34 other defendants charged in connection with the CLV-DTA began before the Phnom Penh Municipal Court. None of the 37 defendants were present at trial. The Prosecutor submitted a request for the case to be divided into five separate cases, given the number of defendants and that the issues were "complicated". The defense lawyers opposed this request, arguing it jeopardized their right to a fair trial. However, the Prosecutor's request was granted, splitting the case into five separate cases on the charge of "incitement".

25 February 2025:

The Phnom Penh Appeal Court upheld the decision of the Municipal Court to separate the case.

March – June 2025:

Following the ruling of the Appeal Court, the judge for the Court of First Instance then had a four-month period (March-June) to initiate the trial. Once this period lapsed, the defense lawyer made a request for the PPA activists' release from bail. The request was made under Article 249 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which provides that a defendant in pre-trial detention will be "automatically released" if they are not called to trial by the time this period has lapsed.

3 July 2025:

The Phnom Penh Municipal Court held a hearing for the request for release for Srun Sorn, Pheung Sophea, and San Sith. The Prosecutor requested that their detention be extended.

4 July 2025:

The Phnom Penh Municipal Court issued its verdict regarding the release request, denying the request.

27 August 2025:

The trial for Srun Sorn, Pheung Sophea, San Sith and the 34 other defendants began before the Phnom Penh Municipal Court. The lawyer for the PPA activists once again requested bail for them, making this the fifth time. The Court also heard about the backgrounds of some of the defendants.

3 September 2025

The trial continued at the Phnom Penh Municipal Court. For the fifth time, the PPA activists were denied bail. By this stage, they had spent more than one year in pre-trial detention. The Court began hearing the first of the five cases, which includes the PPA activists, but only Srun Sorn was questioned this day. It adopted a rotation system for adjudicating the five cases, whereby it opened the first case, and would continue with each of the four other cases, before then returning to the first.

21 November 2025

The trial continued before the Phnom Penh Municipal Court, during which Pheung Sophea and San Sith were questioned. The judge also allowed the defense lawyers to ask additional questions to Srun Srorn, who had been questioned in the previous hearing.

15 December 2025:

A bail request for the PPA activists was denied by the Phnom Penh Appeal Court, with the judge stating that it had been filed beyond the time permitted under the Code of Criminal Procedure.

21 January 2026:

The Phnom Penh Municipal Court continued the hearing for Srun Srorn, Pheung Sophea and San Sith by questioning four defense witnesses for the activists.

2 February 2026:

The Supreme Court upheld the decision of the Appeal Court from December 2025, which stated that the bail application had been filed after the time allowed by the law.

24 February 2026:

The final hearing in the case of the PPA activists took place. The hearing was focused on the closing arguments from the prosecutor and defense lawyers. The defendants were also permitted to make brief, final statements for their case. The judge did not set the date for the verdict to be announced and stated that the involved parties would be informed later.

April 2026:

Nearly two months since the final hearing of the PPA activists, the defense lawyers were informed about the date for the verdict, which was set for 29 April 2026. By the date of their verdict, Srun Srorn, Pheung Sophea and San Sith have been held for 645 days behind bars.