

# Dr Socheata SAO

Law Ph.D. Graduate, Deputy Director of the English Language Based Master of Law (ELBML) Programme, Commercial Arbitrator, and Independent Business and Human Rights Researcher

## EDUCATION:

### MONASH UNIVERSITY

LAW PH.D. CANDIDATE, AUSTRALIA | JUN 2016 - JAN 2021

**Graduate Awards:** Monash Graduate Scholarship (MGS); Monash International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (MIPRS); and Monash Graduate Research Completion Award (MGRCA).

#### International Conferences:

- Presented a paper on "The Current State of Affairs for Access to Remedies for People and Communities Affected by Alleged Arbitrary Takings of Land in the Agribusiness Industry in ASEAN" at the International Conference on "Business and Human Rights: Holding Government Accountable in Asia," held from 13-14 July 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. My conference paper was published as Chapter 9 on "Land Grabs in ASEAN: Access to Remedies in Agribusiness Industry" in James Gomez and Robin Ramcharan (eds), *Business and Human Rights in Asia: The Duty of the State to Protect* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).
- Participated in the "Property Rights and Human Rights: New Possibilities in an Age of Inequality Symposium," held from 9-10 August 2018 at Monash University Law Chambers, in Melbourne, Australia.

In May 2019, I was admitted as a member of the Global Business and Human Rights Scholars Association, a non-profit and non-partisan association with a mission to promote global interdisciplinary scholarship in the area of business and human rights.

### UNIVERSITY OF KENT

LL.M. IN INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL LAW (DISTINCTION), UNITED KINGDOM | SEP 2012 - SEP 2013

**Academic Activity:** Global Skills Award Programme

**Graduate Award:** Kent Law School Taught Masters Overseas Full Scholarship 2012/2013.

### ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF LAW AND ECONOMICS (RULE)

BACHELOR OF LAWS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE BASED BACHELOR OF LAW (ELBBL) PROGRAMME, CAMBODIA | OCT 2007 - AUG 2012

#### Academic Activities:

- Jan 2010: Competed in the International Client Counselling Competition, Phnom Penh.
- Mar 18 - 20, 2010: Competed in the 3rd Düsseldorf Pre-Moot Rounds, Düsseldorf, Germany.
- Mar 25 - Apr 02, 2010: Competed in the Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot, Vienna, Austria.

I was a member of the first Cambodian team to participate in the Düsseldorf Pre-Moot Rounds and the Willem C. Vis Moot in Vienna.

### NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT (NUM)

BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ECONOMICS, CAMBODIA | OCT 2007 - AUG 2012

### ICN BUSINESS SCHOOL (INSTITUT COMMERCIAL DE NANCY)

ONE-YEAR EXCHANGE IN THE BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (BBA) PROGRAMME, FRANCE | SEP 2010 - MAY 2011

I was one of the first two Cambodian students who were admitted to the exchange programme.

## PUBLICATION:

Socheata Sao, 'Land Grabs in ASEAN: Access to Remedies in Agribusiness Industry' in James Gomez and Robin Ramcharan (eds), *Business and Human Rights in Asia: Duty of the State to Protect* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020) | 2020

## AREAS OF SPECIALISATION AND RESEARCH INTEREST:

Business and human rights; corporate social responsibility; corporate governance; contract law; land rights; land grabbing; transnational tort litigation; and business and human rights arbitration

## LANGUAGES:

- Khmer: Native language
- English: Fluent
- French: Pre-intermediate

## FELLOWSHIP AWARD AND TRAINING:

### THE REGIONAL ASIA HUMAN RIGHTS RESEARCH INITIATIVE 2019, run by Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI) | Mar - Sep 2019

**Courses:** Intensive one-week research workshop on human rights research methodology held in Bangkok from 25-29 March 2019; individual research with guidance from RWI mentors; and a follow-up workshop held in Jakarta from 10-12 September 2019 to present the research to RWI mentors and peer participants.

### THE 6th INTERNATIONAL WINTER COURSE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ASIA 2019, run by Seoul National University Human Rights Centre | 7 - 18 Jan 2019

**Courses:** Intensive two-week course on human rights, with a special focus on economic and social rights in the context of Asia. The course covered issues on gender, refugees, corporate responsibility to human rights, and populism. The course also comprised individual research and advocacy plan presentations; group discussions; and field visits to human rights organisations in Seoul.

### INTENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME ON HUMAN RIGHTS, run by RWI | Oct - Dec 2015

**Courses:** Online training comprising five modules on the historical background to human rights, international instruments, monitoring systems, regional human rights systems, and a final test; face-to-face training in Lund, Sweden, to further discuss the above topics; and field visits to human rights institutions in Sweden and Denmark.

### KHMER ROUGE TRIBUNAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME, run by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) | Mar - Sep 2012

**Courses:** Three-week training course on the history of the Democratic Kampuchea Regime, non-violent communication, reconciliation approaches, and fair trial rights principles; two-week study trip to international tribunals in Germany and the Netherlands; and four-month internship at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC).

## SELECTED PRESENTATIONS:

**Panellist in a panel discussion on Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy and Southeast Asia at the 15th CAPI Roundtable on Southeast Asia in Global Context**

organised by the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives (CAPI) at the University of Victoria, Canada | 03 Mar 2023

**Panellist in the panel discussion on "Corporate Accountability for SLAPP Lawsuits in Thailand: What Are the Responsibilities of the Government and Business to Prevent and End the Use of Retaliatory Lawsuits?"**

organised by Global Labour Justice-International Labour Rights Forum (GLJ-ILRF) Thailand and Human Rights and Development Foundation (HRDF) Thailand | 17 Dec 2021

**Main Speaker in the Webinar on "Assessing Access to an Effective Remedy for Individuals and Communities Affected by Arbitrary Land Takings and Related Human Rights Violations in ASEAN"**

organised by Bonavero Institute of Human Rights and Oxford Business and Human Rights Network (OxBHR) | 10 Nov 2021

**Presenter at the Business and Human Rights Compendium Training School on my book chapter: Socheata Sao, 'Land Grabs in ASEAN: Access to Remedies in Agribusiness Industry' in James Gomez and Robin Ramcharan (eds), *Business and Human Rights in Asia: The Duty of the State to Protect* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020)**

organised by RWI | 11 Dec 2020

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

**Deputy Director of the English Language Based Master of Law (ELBML) Programme, RULE, Phnom Penh | Feb 2021 - Present**

- Manage the ELBML faculty, including recruiting lecturers, and drafting employment contracts.
- Manage and supervise office staff and address administrative issues.
- Determine and implement the programme's design, direction and strategic plans.
- Prepare and implement the programme's yearly budget plan.
- Periodically review and, when required, revise the ELBML curriculum to ensure they meet the international standards and the ASEAN University Network criteria.
- Review ELBML course syllabuses and assess the content and quality of individual courses.
- Plan and convene the programme's webinars, seminars and public lectures.
- Regularly communicate with ELBML lecturers, RULE officers and ELBML students.
- Plan and manage student recruitment process.
- Prepare ELBML term schedules.
- Manage student affairs and address academic issues.
- Represent ELBML to RULE, potential partners and the public.
- Search for collaboration opportunities with potential partners such as foreign universities, local law firms and other relevant stakeholders.

**Lecturer Teaching Legal Research, Method and Analysis; and Business and Human Rights in the ELBML Programme | Jul 2021 - Present**

- Develop the course syllabuses, course modules and create informative course materials including power-point presentations, handouts, exercise and case studies to distribute to students.
- Prepare and conduct weekly lectures.
- Organise tutorial sessions to support under-performed students.
- Design the assessment for the courses and grade students' assignments and exam papers.

**Independent Researcher, Author and Resource Person in the Field of Business and Human Rights | Oct 2020 - Present**

- Reviewed seven draft chapters and developed teaching demonstrations on selected chapters in RWI's Cambodia Business and Human Rights Compendium (2021);
- Co-author chapters for RWI's Responsible Business Conduct and Human Rights textbook.

**Reviewer in the Civil Liability for Human Rights Violations Handbook Project of Oxford University's Bonavero Institute of Human Rights | Dec 2021 - Jan 2022**

Critically reviewed and provided detailed comments on the draft chapter on civil liability for human rights violations in Cambodia.

**Deputy Director of the ELBBL Programme, RULE, Phnom Penh | Sep 2015 - May 2016**

- Reviewed and revised the ELBBL curriculum to ensure they met the international standards and the ASEAN University Network criteria.
- Assessed the content and quality of individual courses.
- Managed the ELBBL faculty, including recruiting lecturers, drafting employment contracts, supervised consultants and office staff; and addressing administrative issues.
- Managed student affairs and academic issues.
- Maintained strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders.
- With the Programme Director, coordinated international moot competitions (including the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition, the Willem C. Vis (East) International Commercial Arbitration Moot, the Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Moot and the Jean Pictet International Humanitarian Law Competition) and oversaw try-outs for all competitions.

- Coached and advised ELBBL teams competing in national and international debate and public speaking competitions.
- Submitted an article, "The "ASEAN Way" as the Way Forward for the ASEAN Economic Community," for publishing in the Cambodian Yearbook of Comparative Legal Studies. The article was updated and revised from my dissertation on "A New Paradigm of Trade and Investment Liberalisation?: The "ASEAN Way" as the Way Forward for the ASEAN Economic Community" that was submitted to the Kent Law School in September 2013 in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters of Law in International Commercial Law.

#### **Legal Associate, Sok Siphana & Associates, Phnom Penh | Jan 2014 - Aug 2015**

- Performed high-quality legal research and drafted analytical legal opinions on various issues such as corporate governance, investment, trade and commercial disputes for corporate clients.
- Conducted extensive legal research on topics such as banking, corporate governance, investment and secured transactions for the law firm's publication project with Thompson Reuters.
- Drafted agreements and other legal documents such as the memorandum and articles of association for limited and public listed companies.
- Assisted local and foreign clients to incorporate a company and obtain the required licences for their businesses.

#### **Lecturer Teaching Contract Law in the ELBBL Programme, RULE, Phnom Penh | Sep 2014 - Jan 2015**

- Developed contract law modules that covered both Cambodia's Civil Code and contract law principles under the US and UK common law traditions.
- Created informative course materials to distribute to students.
- Prepared and conducted weekly lectures.
- Designed the course assessment and graded students' assignments and exam papers.

#### **Judge in the General Rounds of the National Round of the 12th Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Moot Competition, RULE, Phnom Penh | 13 Dec 2014**

#### **Arbitrator in the Semi-Final of the National Round of the 12th Willem C. Vis (East) International Commercial Arbitration Moot, Phnom Penh | 23 Feb 2014**

#### **Legal Intern, Office of the Co-Prosecutors, ECCC, Phnom Penh | Jun - Sep 2012**

#### **Legal Intern, Supreme Court Chamber, ECCC, Phnom Penh | Jan - Mar 2012**

#### **Judicial Assistant to a Judge, Court of Appeal, Phnom Penh | Jul 2011 - May 2012**

#### **REFERENCE:**

Available upon request.

#### **CONTACT:**

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