



# The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights

ON 23 OCTOBER 2009, ASEAN leaders announced the launch of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights at the ASEAN Summit in Thailand. The member states endorsed the High Level Panel's Terms of Reference on the human rights body and announced the new AICHR representatives who then met at the Summit. As part of the announcement, member states pledged to provide \$200,000 to the AICHR in a start-up fund and stated that the fund will be topped up annually from member states and external sources. The new body will meet twice a year and as part of its oversight function the ASEAN Summit will review the body's mandate every five years. The appointed member state representatives will serve three year terms with a maximum appointment for two terms. The member states did not establish a formal role for civil society and confusion surrounded civil society involvement at their planned meeting in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand last weekend. Below is a list of the member state representatives to the new ASEAN human rights body and a brief overview of their professional backgrounds.

## **NTS Team**

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### **Abdul Hamid Bakal (Brunei Darussalam)**

Abdul Hamid Bakal was the Syar'ie Chief Judge, State Judiciary Department of the Prime Minister Office from 2001 until 2008. Prior to this Abdul Hamid Bakal served as Chief Kadhi in the Ministry of Religious Affairs. He is also a member of the Privy Council, Brunei Religious Council, Royal Meeting Council and Adat Istiadat Council. He holds two degrees from Al-Azhar University, Egypt in Islamic Studies. His professional career has spanned more than 40 years.



### **Om Yentieng (Cambodia)**

Om Yentieng is the Chair of the Cambodia Human Rights Committee and Senior Advisor to Prime Minister Hun Sun. Om Yentieng was a member of the High Level Panel which drafted the Terms of Reference for the AICHR.



### **Rafendi Djamin (Indonesia)**

Rafendi Djamin is the Coordinator of the National Human Rights Working Group Indonesia, a national rights lobby, and is also the convener of Solidarity for Asia Peoples' Advocacy Task-Force on ASEAN and Human Rights (SAPA TF-AHR). He has worked as part of the Indonesian human rights movement since his arrest and detention under Suharto for his work as a student leader at the University of Jakarta. Rafendi Djamin also holds a Master's degree in Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies – The Hague, The Netherlands.



### **Bounkeut Sangsomsak (Lao PDR)**

Bounkeut Sangsomsak is currently Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and was a Member of the High Level Panel which drafted the Terms of Reference for the AICHR. He holds degrees from the Royal Institute of Law and Administration, University of Sisavangvong Vientiane; International Institute of Public Administration Paris; and the University of Sorbonne, Paris, France. His career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has spanned more than 30 years.

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### **Muhammad Shafee Abdullah (Malaysia)**

Muhammad Shafee is a serving Member of Malaysia's National Human Rights Commission; Member of the Criminal Law and Finance Committee of the Bar Council. The main areas of his professional work are in the areas of Human Rights, Criminal Defense Rights, and investigation into the independence of Judiciary. He holds law degrees from the University Malaya and the London School of Economic and Political Sciences (LSE) and has spent more than 30 years in the legal profession.

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### **Kyaw Tint Swe (Myanmar)**

Kyaw Tint Swe is the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations. He holds degrees from the University of Yangon and a post-graduate diploma in International Relations and Development from the Institute of Social Studies – The Hague, The Netherlands. His diplomatic career has spanned more than 40 years.

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### **Rosario Gonzalez Manalo (the Philippines)**

Rosario Manalo currently lectures and is the Chair of the European Studies Program in the Ateneo de Manila University and was a Member of the High Level Panel which drafted the Terms of Reference for the AICHR. She holds degrees from the University of the Philippines and Long Island University, USA. She is a career diplomat which included posts across Europe and the posts of Chairwoman of the UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Her professional career has spanned over 50 years.

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### **Richard Magnus (Singapore)**

Richard Magnus is a Member of the Public Service Commission; Chairman of the Casino Regulatory Authority; a board member of the Land Transport Authority and a member of the Bioethics Advisory Committee; Chairman of the Political Films Committee; and Senior Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. He holds two law degrees. He served for over 40 years in the legal profession.

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### **Sriprapha Petcharamesree (Thailand)**



Dr. Petcharamesree is currently a Professor and a former Director of the Office of Human Rights Studies and Social Development of Mahidol University, Thailand and a member of the Subcommittees on Human Rights Situation Assessment, Child Rights, and Administration of Justice and Legislation of the Thai National Human Rights Commission. She holds a degree in political science from Thammasat University, and her D.E.A. and Ph.D. in International Politics from the University of Paris-X Nanterre, France. She started her career as a social worker for the UNICEF's Emergency Operations for Cambodian Refugees and subsequently joined the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation. Sriprapha Petcharamesree has spent her career both in academia and human rights activism. Her professional career has spanned over 30 years.

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### **Do Ngoc Son (Viet Nam)**

Do Ngoc Son is Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director-General of the Asia II Department. He is a former Head of ASEAN Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a former Ambassador to Thailand; and was Governor of the Asia-Europe Foundation in 2003. His diplomatic career has spanned over 30 years. He holds a degree from the University of La Habana, Cuba.

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Picture sourced from the following websites (in order of layout)

- <http://nanyang2.xmu.edu.cn>
- <http://khmerization.blogspot.com>
- <http://jakarta45.wordpress.com>
- <http://www.dfa.gov.ph>
- <http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org>
- <http://untreaty.un.org>
- <http://www.ndcp.edu.ph>
- <https://www.cha.org.sg>
- <http://www.glocol.osaka-u.ac.jp>
- <http://www.asdu.ait.ac.th>

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