

DC-Cam Preparation for Provincial Screenings of the First Khmer Rouge Tribunal Verdict

The first verdict of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC) will be announced in May or June 2010. The seven-month trial of Kaing Guek Eav *alias* Duch for crimes committed in connection with the infamous S-21/Tuol Sleng prison, although limited to one detention site, provided the first opportunity for Cambodians to hear public discussion and debate on policies of the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) period that resulted in the deaths of nearly two million people in only three years, eight months, and twenty days. Thousands of survivors personally attended the hearings and nearly a hundred directly participated in the trial as civil parties. Duch's confession of his crimes and the Court's judgment of his actions is meaningful even for survivors unconnected to S-21, as it speaks to the responsibility of the many other prison chiefs still living who will never be held accountable for similar acts.

The second trial or Case 002, although more significant because it will judge the four living senior leaders (Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary, and Ieng Thirith) and the responsibility of the DK leadership, is not expected to begin until 2011 and no verdict will be issued before 2012, by which time the four accused will all be in their early to mid 80s. Due to the long delay before the Case 002 trial and verdict, and the uncertainty if all accused will live to see judgment, the verdict in the *Duch* case will not only be the first legal reckoning for DK crimes, but also may be the only formal accounting of the abuses of that period.

In recognition of the historic significance of this event for all Cambodians, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) will host live and also replayed screenings of the verdict in seven provincial locations over several days. Although the ECCC courtroom is the largest of all international/hybrid courts, its capacity is limited to 500 persons, not nearly enough to accommodate all those with an interest in hearing the Court's judgment. Already the Office of Public Affairs is planning to provide video links on the Court's grounds to accommodate the overflow. For less expense than bringing 500 people to Phnom Penh, DC-Cam plans to bring the verdict to 300 or more people in each screening location.

Four DC-Cam staff members will facilitate the event at each location and document participants' reactions through interviews, photographs, and video recordings. Staff will distribute to all attendees free copies of DC-Cam's monthly Khmer language magazine, *Searching for the Truth*, and also a new illustrated booklet entitled, "Genocide: The Importance of Case 002," describing the biographies and alleged responsibility of the Case 002 accused. A banner announcing and directing people to

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the screenings will be hung near each viewing site and traditional Khmer snacks will be provided.

Due to limited resources the Center has selected only seven provincial locations, chosen because they are the home districts of commune and village chiefs and victims and former perpetrators who have been actively engaging their communities in the ECCC proceedings. The sites are also historically significant.

The seven screening locations are:

- Svay Khleang, **Kampong Cham**
- Rumlich, **Pursat**
- Koh Thom, **Kandal**
- Prey Lvea, **Takeo**
- Trapeang Veng, **Banteay Meanchey**
- Veal Sbauv, **Kampong Thom**
- Rumduol, **Svay Rieng**

Although the Center believes that seeing with one's own eyes and hearing with one's own ears is itself a form of justice and therefore plans to bring a small group of 50 to see the verdict in person, it strongly encourages other NGOs to provide screening opportunities around the country as a more cost effective way of sharing this event with large numbers of people than bringing them to the ECCC where only limited courtroom seating will be available. NGOs, donors and Ambassadors will be able to assess more accurately the Cambodian public's response to the verdict if they participate in such local events.

For more information, please contact DC-Cam Outreach Team:



Ser Sayana
Student/Cham
Muslim Community
092-763-272



Sirik Savina
Village Forum/Living
Document
012-688-046



Kim Sovandany
Cambodia Tribunal
Monitor (CTM)
012-711-123



Sa Fatily
Documentary
Film/VPA
012-511-914

The screenings will be held in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and funded by USAID, OSI, DRL, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway

THE LIVING DOCUMENTS PROJECT

http://www.dccam.org/Projects/Living_Doc/Living_Documents.htm