



CIVIL PARTIES ESTABLISH ASSOCIATION TO PROMOTE VICTIMS RIGHTS

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Only two days after the sixth plenary session of the ECCC outlined changes to the future model of victim participation, civil parties from the trial of Kaing Guek Eav (alias Duch) announced that they had established an association to promote victims rights. Thirty-three victims (mostly civil parties in the Duch trial) met this morning to elect officers and establish the mandate of the new organization named the “Association of Victims of the Khmer Rouge Regime”. Chum Mey, a survivor of the Tuol Sleng prison (S-21), was elected president.

Chum Mey announced that the immediate goal of the new organization was to closely monitor the developments at the ECCC and lobby for the rights of civil parties. The association, he continued, was also established to preserve the memories of all of those who perished during the period of Democratic Kampuchea and ensure that future generations never forget what happened during that time. Chum Mey explained that the association would strive to provide material and moral support to the victims of the Khmer Rouge regime.

Chum Mey conveyed the organization’s opposition to the recent decision of the plenary session that civil parties in future trials at the ECCC would be collectively represented. The organization, he explained, does not believe that a single voice is sufficient to represent the multitude of civil parties expected to participate in the second trial at the ECCC. He also explained that the civil party boycott, which began after the trial chamber’s two decisions on August 27 that civil party lawyers would not be permitted to question character witnesses or make pleadings related to sentencing, would continue until the court responded to a letter the civil parties submitted expressing their discontent with the decisions.