



UN-backed tribunal denies appeal for release of three Khmer Rouge leaders **April 30, 2010**

The United Nations-backed tribunal in Cambodia dealing with mass killings and other crimes committed under the Khmer Rouge three decades ago today dismissed appeals by three of the regime's leaders to release them from provisional detention ahead of their trials.

The pre-trial chamber of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) found that provision detention is necessary to prevent Ieng Sary, who was foreign minister under the Khmer Rouge regime in the late 1970s, from fleeing. His wife, Ieng Thirith, who served as Minister of Social Action during the Democratic Kampuchea regime, was also denied release to prevent her from exerting pressure on witnesses or destroying evidence.

Khieu Samphan, who served as Head of State during the regime, also had his appeal against extending his provisional detention denied today after the ECCC found that detaining is necessary for his protection and to preserve public order.

All three were arrested in November 2007 and have been charged with genocide; crimes against humanity and war crimes; and murder, torture and religious persecution under Cambodia's 1956 penal code.

Under an agreement signed by the UN and Cambodia, the ECCC was set up in 2003 as an independent court using a mixture of Cambodian staff and judges and foreign personnel. It is designated to try those deemed most responsible for crimes and serious violations of Cambodian and international law between 17 April 1975 and 6 January 1979, when up to three million people perished at the hands of the Khmer Rouge.

Last week, UN Legal Council Patricia O'Brien called for donors to provide funds to support the ECCC, voicing concern about the financial situation, including the cash flow.

After a meeting in the capital with Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister Sok An, they issued a joint statement in which they urged the international community to provide contributions and pledges to national and international components of the tribunal. The two officials stressed their continued strong support for the ECCC and their intention to work closely together to ensure that the tribunal is successful.

They noted the completion of the trial phase in the case of Kaing Guek Eav, also known as “Duch,” who is charged with crimes including torture and premeditated murder while he was in charge of the notorious S-21 detention camp.