

## **Khmer Rouge War Crimes Tribunal Running Out of Funds** **August 17, 2012**

The United Nations may be forced to withdraw from the Khmer Rouge war crimes tribunal if funds from the international community are not forthcoming, according to the U.N. envoy to the tribunal.

The court, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), which was created jointly by the U.N. and the Cambodian Government, is currently trying three leaders of the brutal Khmer Rouge regime for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

David Scheffer, United Nations special expert to the court, says the budget for the international component in the trial is at an all-time low.

“We have enough cash for the international budget to the end of August. Even our contingency fund is being drained right now to pay just essential expenses of the court,” he told Australia’s national broadcaster, ABC, Aug. 16.

Kelly Askin, who heads international justice work for the U.S.-based Open Society Justice Initiative has just returned from the trials in Cambodia. She described the present situation as “untenable.”

“Courts have to go begging every few months in order to keep their doors open and fulfill their mandates,” she told The Epoch Times by text message.

Scheffer said funding shortages were occurring at a critical time in the trials.

“We are right in the middle of our Nuremberg trial of the last surviving leaders of the Pol Pot regime,” he said.

Followers of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, the Khmer Rouge, renamed the country Democratic Kampuchea and under the leadership of Pol Pot, ruled the small Southeast Asian state between 1975 and 1979.

Around 2 million Cambodians are estimated to have died, or around one quarter of the population, under the Khmer Rouge rule, a result of torture, purges, untreated illness, and agricultural mismanagement.

Pol Pot, known as “brother number one,” died in 1998 without ever facing a trial. In the present trial, however, are “brother number two,” Nuon Chea, the deputy secretary of the

party; Khieu Samphan, head of state of Democratic Kampuchea; and Ieng Sary, deputy prime minister for foreign affairs.

The initial stage of the trial focuses on the forced removal of people from the capital, Phnom Penh, to the countryside where large numbers were executed or died after being subjected to forced labor.

According to Human Rights Watch, the tribunal has spent more than \$150 million since its inception 6 years ago. During that time in Case 001, only one defendant, Kaing Guek Eav (alias Duch), has been convicted. He was the warden of the notorious Tuol Sleng detention center where around 14,000 people were tortured and then executed.

#### Funding for Justice

Open Society Justice Initiative's Askin says it is important for international donors to step up, not only for Case 002 of senior leaders but also for Case 003/004, "others most responsible."

Without accountability and justice for the crimes committed, "they fail the victims miserably," she said.

Scheffer says the ECCC needs another \$5 million to last till the end of the year. Although it has pledges from international donors for \$4.2 million, "no one has delivered," he said.

Australia, the second largest donor to the tribunal, has said it supports the ECCC, Foreign Minister Bob Carr announcing funds of \$1.4 million for the tribunal while in Cambodia in July.

The funds will be paid to the UN following standard "administrative processes," likely later this month, according to an AusAID spokesperson.

The spokesperson said Australia would also be active in encouraging other nations to pay their fair share.

"International support is vitally important," the spokesperson said in an email. "This is the most important international criminal trial of the last 30 years."