



**Khmer Rouge trial a ‘message’ to the world: UN envoy  
Sok Khemara  
November 22, 2011**

With the trial of three Khmer Rouge leaders now underway in Phnom Penh, the UN’s envoy for human rights says the court is sending a message.

“Everybody who has committed atrocities, one day should be answerable to the public, to the international community,” Surya Suedi, UN special rapporteur for human rights in Cambodia, told VOA Khmer.

The court is currently trying Khmer Rouge leaders Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan and Ieng Sary for atrocity crimes including genocide in a landmark trial that was years in the making.

In an exclusive interview, Subedi said the trial is symbolic.

“Even if it’s later, it is better to bring them to justice and have everything out in the public domain so people know, the future generations will know, if you commit crimes, international crimes, one day the long arm of the law will reach you and you will be held accountable for the atrocities you have committed,” he said.

Subedi spoke to VOA Khmer after he was a guest speaker for a conference on the Paris Peace Accords in Berkeley, California.

Heather Ryan, a former tribunal monitor and another guest speaker, said the leaders were being tried because nationwide crimes were committed under their authority. That fact makes the trial complex but “fascinating,” she said.

“The accused are people who were [allegedly] intimately involved in some of the most atrocious Khmer Rouge crimes, and I think that the people of Cambodia will learn a lot,” she said.

However, the trial is being held under a pall, due to ongoing criticism of the court’s handling of two more cases, which would require five more indictments, a move the government opposes. It has spent nearly \$200 million and has managed only one conviction, of Tuol Sleng prison chief Duch, who relatively light sentence angered many victims and is now under appeal.

Richard Solomon, a former assistant secretary of state and ambassador, told a group of Cambodian-Americans in Berkeley that the court’s work has been undermined by Prime Minister Hun Sen’s outspokenness over the two cases, and he criticized the UN for failing to address allegations of political interference there.

“I think many of us have been disappointed that the UN has not reacted more strongly to the subversion of the tribunal process,” he said, adding that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon should “become more active in pressuring the Hun Sen government to establish, re-establish, a more effective tribunal situation.”