

**Judges Stand by Khmer Rouge Court's Efforts**  
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In an uncharacteristic public statement, judges of the Khmer Rouge tribunal's Trial Chamber yesterday spoke out in response to an opinion piece by Margot Wallstrom, the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

In the piece, which ran in numerous publications, including on Post on May 29, Wallstrom said that unless the tribunal found a way to address crimes of sexual violence, "it will be perceived as implicitly reinforcing the silence . . . and not providing a counterbalance to the impunity that has prevailed."

The Trial Chamber judges, who typically do not respond to media reports, replied yesterday that the ECCC had "implemented measures to afford appropriate protection and support to victims of sexual violence, honour their courage in coming forward, and acknowledge the significance of their contribution to the ECCC's work".

"Special Representative Wallstrom expresses regret that aside from the issue of forced marriage, crimes of sexual violence have only been marginally taken up by the ECCC, and recommends that 'the scope of what can be prosecuted . . . be revisited'," the judges wrote. "This possibility is excluded by the ECCC's legal framework."

"[All] international tribunals, including the ECCC, can only ever hope to bring to justice a small percentage of perpetrators of all crimes committed," the statement reads.

The judges, like Wallstrom, highlighted the importance of extra-judicial measures like the Cambodian Women's Hearing held in December in empowering victims of sexual violence and educating the public.

The reality of the tribunal's mandate is that victims of sexual violence will receive little – if any – reparation.

Victims in the tribunal's landmark case against Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, had their names placed in the final judgment and received a compilation of his statements of apology.

Victims of sexual violence in the second case against three ageing former regime leaders do not even know when they will have their day in court, let alone what type of

reparations they will receive.

The Trial Chamber split Case 002 into a series of shorter trials. Forced marriage is not included in the first trial segment, and the judges have not yet scheduled the content of the second or subsequent trial segments.

At the recent launch of a book compiling testimonies from victims of sex crimes who spoke at last year's Cambodian Women's Hearing, the compilation's author said there were still grievous cultural barriers to discussing the issue of sexual violence under the Khmer Rouge.

"I understand that we sometimes have the culture of hiding: hiding things, hiding information, hiding all those negative things," Duong Savorn, author of *The Mystery of Sexual Violence Under the Khmer Rouge Regime*, said.

"The question is whether we should hide this information, continue to not disclose this information, or reveal something for the people of the next generation."

In a survey by the Cambodian Defenders Project, 30 per cent of respondents said they had witnessed a rape during the Khmer Rouge regime.