



‘Some Relief’ for Khmer Rouge Victims in US

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Cambodian-American victims of the Khmer Rouge who filed with the court in Cambodia met in Virginia last week to get updates from the UN-backed trials of three former regime leaders.

Among them was Chea Mary, who smiled as she told those gathered that she felt she had become a part of history by seeking justice at the tribunal.

“We have to stand up and speak out on what we want in terms of justice for our lost members,” she told some 30 people who had gathered in Fairfax, Va., referring to family, friends and loved ones who did not survive the Khmer Rouge. “Imagine how afraid they were before being executed. I’ve never forgotten any of them.”

Chea Mary was among several thousand people who filed complainants to the court, which allows such filings as part of key mandate for national reconciliation. She is also among those who have been accepted as a civil party participant in the trial of three regime leaders—Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan and Ieng Sary—for atrocity crimes.

She and more than 170 others in the US had help in their filings from the Applied Social Research Institute of Cambodia, a US-based organization that helps Cambodians cope with mental health issues stemming from the trauma of the Khmer Rouge and years of strife that followed.

“We’re very excited that her testimony got accepted, as well as other survivors that submitted their claims via ASRIC,” said Nou Leakhena, head of the institute. “So she is here to share her experience, why she filed, what she is hoping to find in terms of justice, and calling other survivors to join in this continued fight for justice.”