

'Enemies of the People' to show at Sundance
Men Kimseng
December 14, 2009

"Enemies of the People," a documentary that demonstrates the Khmer Rouge chain of command, will show at the Sundance Film Festival in the US in January.

The film was selected out of 782 film documentaries in the World Cinema Documentary category and will compete with 11 other films at the prestigious festival, held each year in various towns in the state of Utah, including Sundance.

The category includes films from Brazil, France, Ireland, the Palestinian territories and others.

Sundance organizers describe the story: "A young journalist whose family was killed by the Khmer Rouge befriends the perpetrators of the Killing Fields genocide, evoking shocking revelations."

The film was produced by Thet Sambath, a journalist for the English-language Phnom Penh Post, and Rob Lemkin, an experienced producer who has worked with the BBC and The History Channel.

The film also demonstrates the chain of command of the Khmer Rouge, connecting the way in which cadre passed down orders, "from the top to the bottom," Lemkin said in a recent interview.

"This documentary explains clearly [about the regime], so that once it is out, Cambodian victims will understand why there were killings, lack of food to eat, and why people died," Thet Sambath said. "At least 98 percent of the truth will be revealed if not 100 percent."

The film comes at a time when the Khmer Rouge tribunal in Phnom Penh is preparing a case against senior leaders of the regime, including its chief ideologue, Nuon Chea, who Thet Sambath interviewed at length.

It is unclear whether "Enemies of the People" will be used as evidence in the court.

"It is up to judges to decide on any documentary to use in the court's legal procedures," tribunal spokesman Reach Sambath said. "But in general we praise those who have the goodwill to produce a documentary film or a movie for younger

generations or Cambodian people to use to garner more knowledge about Democratic Kampuchea.”

Following Sundance, the producers say they will focus on Cambodia.

“We really hope that this film can be released in Cambodia and that it can be an agent of positive change in Cambodia,” Lemkin said. “It can give confidence to those people to speak openly about what they were involved with, so that future generations in Cambodia will not be at a loss to understand what happened.”