



## **Time Magazine calls weekly program on Khmer Rouge trial a 'sleeper hit' in Cambodia**

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*With up to 3 million viewers each week, "Duch on Trial" program provides many with primary source of information on the international tribunal.*

A current article in Time magazine calls a Cambodian television program that summarizes proceedings in the U.N.-assisted trial of a notorious Khmer Rouge figure "a sleeper hit" that is the main way many Cambodians find out about the trial. According to the article, the "Duch on Trial" program - a collaborative production of the East-West Center, the UC Berkeley War Crimes Study Center and Khmer Mekong Films - garners up to 3 million viewers each week, or 20 percent of Cambodia's population.

"With one in five Cambodians watching the show every week," writes Time correspondent Christopher Shay, "'Duch on Trial' has become the main way many young Cambodians, who were not taught about the Khmer Rouge in school, learn about the historic Khmer Rouge tribunal unfolding in Phnom Penh -- and, in a lot of cases, hear about this dark chapter of their country's history for the first time."

Hosted by veteran Cambodian journalists Neth Pheaktra and Ung Chan Sophea, the weekly half-hour show endeavors to explain the complex legal proceedings in the case against Kaing Guek Eav, alias "Duch," in an accessible and informative manner through the use of trial footage, expert commentary and interviews. Duch has admitted that he ran the Khmer Rouge's dreaded S-21 torture center.

"We consider these films to be a vital tool in helping the Cambodian public and the world at large better understand the complex issues involved in these groundbreaking trials," said David J. Cohen, Director of the Asian International Justice Initiative, or AIJI, which initiated and oversees production of the "Duch on Trial" programs. "The goal is to help make the trial proceedings accessible to everyone in the interest of furthering the process of international justice."

Gregory Stanton, president of the Washington-based NGO Genocide Watch, told Time that the program, with its millions of viewers, has been uniquely effective in bringing the trial into people's lives. "You'll go out to (a) local little village ... and there will be almost nothing there," Stanton said. "Yet there will be a TV set hooked up to set of car batteries, and people watching."

The AIJI engaged Cambodia's premier television production company, Khmer Mekong Films, to produce the "Duch on Trial" programs. The programs are shown on Cambodia's most-watched television network, CTN, as well as being available online for easy viewing worldwide.

The AIJI is a collaboration between the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, and the War Crimes Study Center at UC Berkeley in California. Prior to the start of the trial, the AIJI conducted extensive legal trainings for the officers of the court, as well as a public education campaign that included several informational films that were shown on Cambodian television and at screenings throughout the country. Major funding for the project has come from the British Embassy in Phnom Penh.

Now that the tribunal's first trial is underway, the AIJI has drawn upon five years of experience by the War Crimes Studies Center in conducting human-rights trial monitoring in Sierra Leone, East Timor, Rwanda, and Indonesia to establish a regionally based trial monitoring and film outreach program. The goal of the project is to raise awareness about fair trial rights in Cambodia, as well as document ways in which the trial's proceedings can have a positive impact on Cambodia's domestic criminal trials through the court's interpretation of human rights and domestic criminal procedures.

In addition to a permanent AIJI monitor, the monitoring team includes young lawyers and legal researchers from Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, China, Japan, the Philippines, Switzerland, Germany and the U.S. The monitors write reports on the proceedings as well as assist the film-maker on a weekly basis to choose the highlights from proceedings to be included in 'Duch on Trial'. Additionally, they provide a daily update on the trial which is also utilized by the Court's press and public affairs section. Weekly reports are issued in English, Khmer, Bahasa Indonesia and Mandarin. The team also produces periodic analytical assessments of the trials.