

**Introducing Officers and Founding Members  
of the Association of Khmer Rouge Victims in Cambodia  
Who Will Attend the Case 002 Trial Hearing this June 27**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

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Phnom Penh, 24 June 2011: On Monday, 27 June 2011, the founder and current president of the Association Khmer Rouge Victims in Cambodia, Ms. Theary C. Seng, will be traveling to attend the historic opening day hearing of Case 002 against the most senior Khmer Rouge leaders with some of the officers and founding members of the Association of Khmer Rouge Victims in Cambodia (“AKRVC” or “**Victims Association**”): AKRVC Deputy President Mr. CHEY Theara, AKRVC Officer Ms. OUM Suphany, AKRVC Founding Members Mr. LY Monysak and Ms. TEUNG Sokha and AKRVC newest member Mr. Phirun PEOU.

Except for Mr. Peou, all are **Civil Parties of the Orphans Class** in Case 002, a subgroup of AKRVC. The Khmer Rouge created 1,200,000 orphans who survived. Explains AKRVC President Ms. Seng: *“At best, it has been misunderstood and at worst, it has been manipulated that the Association of Khmer Rouge Victims in Cambodia is really only my voice, which is completely false. These other voices of ARKVC founding members, detailed below, have been cultivated and projected in countless forums and venues for the last 3-4 years since 2007 beginning with the seminars on the Civil Parties of Orphans Class and the public forums on Justice and Reconciliation in general in all the provinces of Cambodia. Of course, their individual voices compared to the recurrence of my public voice will appear less, but that is only natural in light of my many different full-time roles as lawyer, civil party victim, human rights advocate, NGO leader, author and AKRVC founder/president. This press release is to give a more formal introduction to a few of these courageous, persistent, articulate, active voices.”*

**Mr. CHEY Theara – AKRVC Deputy President**

Mr. CHEY Theara and his family were forcibly transferred from their house. Mr. Theara’s uncle told the Khmer Rouge that they wanted to leave one day later because his (the uncle's) mother had just come back from hospital. The uncle was killed by the KR in Phnom Penh.

In 1976, **Mr. Theara’s mother died because she was forced to carry dirt without being provided enough food just 3 days after she had given birth to a child.** In 1976, **his 4 younger siblings died** from malaria in Tuol Chreh Village, Sau Phi Sub-district (this village and sub-district cannot be found in the geographic database), Koh Krala District, Battambang Province (Zone 1). In 1977, Mr. Theara was sent to a mobile unit to build a dam and canal. Late 1978, **the village chief of Tuol Chreh named Horm ordered militias to kill his father in Stueng Dontry crime site** (Moung Russei District

Battambang Province). In 1979 the applicant lived alone because all of his family members had died.

During the LON Nol regime, Mr. Theara's father named THÁCH Choay, his mother named KIM Sovan and his many siblings lived in Phnom Penh. In 1975, Mr. Theara and his family members were forcibly transferred from Phnom Penh to Samraong Yaong District (not found in geographic database, but there is a Samraong District), Takeo Province, where they stayed for six months. Then they were forcibly transferred to Battambang Province. Mr. Theara's grandmother was operated at a hospital without a name located in Samraong Yaong District (not found in geographic database but there is only Samraong District), Takeo Province. In April, Mr. Theara lived in children's unit. His mother and his younger sibling died in 1976. Mr. Theara does not remember the exact date of their death. During the KR regime, all members of Mr. Theara's immediate family were killed by the Khmer Rouge. Mr. Theara suffers from the forced transfer. He is constantly having nightmares.

Mr. CHEY Theara is an active Deputy President of the Association of Khmer Rouge Victims and has been attending public forums and conferences conducted by CSD, CJR and now CIVICUS Cambodia. He has given extensive interviews on behalf of AKRVC, the next one being a special guest of the very popular *Hello VOA* on Monday night, 27 June 2011, after the historic first day of the Case 002 trial hearing against Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary and Ieng Thirith.



*AKRVC Deputy President Mr. CHEY Theara (right) on the panel at a CJR Public Forum: Transforming Killing Fields into Healing, Living Fields in former KR stronghold of Anlong Veng, 2010.*

### Ms. OUM Suphany

Upon entering Ms. OUM Suphany's house, one can't help but marvel at the countless cabinets filled with books, manuscripts, awards, music compositions and various other forms of creative outlet. Currently, Ms. Suphany is the most prolific Cambodian novelist and lyricists.

Born in 1946, Ms. Suphany has written in her diary religiously every night since she was eighteen. Upon introduction, Ms. Suphany has a contagious personality of creativity, charisma and optimism. Without knowing better, one would certainly be startled that, considering her positive outlook and youthful exuberance, Ms. Suphany is one of the four percent of Cambodia's population over the age of 64.

It came as no surprise that, when asked to describe the Pol Pot regime, Ms. Suphany's immediate response was: *"In 1975 when they came into Phnom Penh, I didn't think they would destroy my property so I didn't take anything. But, **they destroyed all of my writing and all of my creativity.**"* This didn't last long, though, as Ms. Suphany's will power and commitment to artistic expression restarted later that year as she collected scraps of paper and makeshift writing implements. Ms. Suphany remembers 17 April 1975 very well. Lost in thought and recalling every detail, **showing us the dress she was wearing as she fled the city.** Following the evacuation, she was sent to Takeo Province where she worked as a farmer. Raised in a large family with five sisters, they were quickly separated and she describes the years as miserable and lonely: *"It was as if we had died from within while continuing to live on the outside."*



*Prolific Khmer write and active member of the Association of Khmer Rouge Victims in Cambodia Madam OUM Suphany displaying items (including this dress) she preserved from before the KR years. She wore this dress the day Phnom Penh fell. (CJR public forum in Phnom Penh, 23 July 2010)*

In the subsequent years, **her mother, father and three sisters had all died, while the remaining two had been lost.** She tried to maintain hope by caring for her second oldest sister who was very ill and suffered in a dilapidated hospital without any treatment. Familial love kept Ms. Suphany at her sister's side whenever possible and she took on tasks such as washing, dressing, and feeding her until 18 November 1977 when the Khmer Rouge forced her to be married.

*"I was furious and decided that I was perhaps willing to die, since it was more than a husband that was being forced on me,"* she laments as she, with dozens of other young women, waited for their soon-to-be husbands. **Ms. Suphany was married to Pichet, a Khmer Rouge cadre five years her junior.** As luck would have it, he surprised her with his eloquence, kindness, and intellect although most other girls were not as lucky. She found herself depending, and **eventually, falling in love with him.**

Then, when he was called to duty at the Vietnamese border, Ms. Suphany was left to care for herself. Soon after, **her sister died** and Ms. Suphany's optimism quickly faded. Unable to properly grieve, for fear of being murdered, she suppressed her emotions expressing them only to her diary.

Since the end of the war, Ms. Suphany has been an ardent advocacy for victim's rights, maintaining Cambodian art, and has **won numerous prestigious awards for her humanitarian and artistic works. Her detailed and emotional diary was published into a book** and recounts all the horrors that she faced during the Pol Pot regime.

She hopes that through organizations like the Victims Association, and the ECCC the next generation will learn from its mistakes and **"everyone will have a strong heart, and a strong body."** She emphasizes the importance of abolishing corruption and supporting one another: *"If all of my relatives have been destroyed and are no longer, there are still others living who are like family because they understand the painful life of misery and suffering that we have gone through together."*

Always maintaining a positive outlook on life, and the future Ms. Suphany for her strength, dedication, and imagination remains a role model and leader within the victims' community.

Ms. OUM Suphany is an active officer of the Association of Khmer Rouge Victims in Cambodia and has been attending conferences and public forums conducted by first the CSD, CJR and now CIVICUS Cambodia.

### Mr. LY Monysak

Born to a wealthy family in Phnom Penh, Mr. LY Monysak recounts his childhood with hints of a smile growing at the corners of his mouth. For a second, it's obvious that he is being transported to a happier and much simpler time. The nostalgia, however, lasts less than a minute as he is suddenly and unexpectedly thrown back into reality. Quickly, his childlike joy vanishes behind aged, suffering eyes and a pained face. Without prompt, he emotionlessly confesses: *“by the time I was nine years old, I was an orphan.”*

When the Khmer Rouge stormed into Phnom Penh on April 17, Mr. Monysak had no idea this would be the last time he would ever see his family. Forced to abandon their home, and flee the city, Mr. Monysak lost his relatives as armed men forced them to Kampong Cham Province. Battling sickness, Mr. Monysak was taken to a local hospital while his parents were ushered to an unknown location. After a full recovery he was released from the hospital, only to discover that the Khmer Rouge had murdered all **22 members of his immediate family** in an attempt to eliminate all wealthy and educated members of society. Less than a decade old, Mr. Monysak found himself wholly alone and hopeless.

Another bout with illness came in 1977, when he was sent to a rural hospital. Upon his release a family asked to become his guardians. For the first time, he felt optimistic, lucky and safe; however, he quickly clarifies that this too was short-lived. **Less than eight months later his new family was taken “for re-education” where they, too, were murdered.**

Mr. Monysak struggled with loneliness and desperation until liberation in 1979 when he was moved to an orphanage. Here, he was educated until lower secondary school, then left to become a soldier at age seventeen. Today, Mr. Monysak is still a soldier; a profession, he feels, has both advantages and disadvantages. The murder of his family, and subsequent destruction of all their property and possessions has left Mr. Monysak financially-dependent on the Cambodian Military, which currently provides for his housing and food. He fears for his future: *“I am getting older, and when I have to retire the government will no longer give me a place to live. I will be homeless, and will have nowhere to go.”*

The devastations caused by the Khmer Rouge, persuaded Mr. Monysak to file a civil party application which the Extraordinary Chambers has accepted into the Civil Parties of Orphans Class. For years he admits to suppressing his emotions, and silencing his thoughts and stories. Learning of the opportunities to come forward from CJR's radio broadcast, Mr. Monysak realized he couldn't stay quiet any longer. He describes the submission of his application as a healing process and a means of relief.



*AKRVC Theary Seng and LY Monysak as guests on Hello VOA (Phnom Penh studio, 23 June 2011)*

Admittedly, he says he has apprehensions as to the effectiveness of the ECCC but through helpful organizations like AKRVC, victims can try to find justice, support and a community both locally and internationally. ***“There is no amount of reparations that could take away my suffering, but I hope that the tribunal will be successful in swiftly finding justice for everyone, especially the 17 April people.”*** Specifically, Monysak blames the Khmer Rouge for stymieing his chances of success saying, ***“my only skill is shooting a gun, and I have no means of getting an education. I am all alone and without hope.”*** He goes on to suggest the tribunal, in collaboration with NGOs and victims support organizations, work to provide training classes so that victims can learn marketable skills and be offered psychological counseling. For the future, Mr. Monysak hopes that through tolerant panel discussions, non-violence workshops, and an accessible trial, there will be hope for the next generation where the anger that spurred the Khmer Rouge will have no place to flourish.

At the encouragement of the Victims Association and taken cue from Ms. OUM Suphany, Mr. Monysak has tried expressing his sentiments on paper in a poem, his first (attached).

Mr. Monysak has been profiled in *The New York Times*, *The International Herald Tribune*, the award-winning feature length film ***Facing Genocide***, among countless other interviews. He has been an active member of the Victims Association from the very beginning, attending many public forums and conferences conducted by the Center for Social Development, Center for Justice and Reconciliation and now CIVICUS Cambodia.

## Mr. Phirun PEOU

Mr. Phirun Peou is our newest member of the Victims Association, hailed from Canada back to his birthplace as a result of a dramatic and joyous, extraordinary reunion with his father 36 years later. His story is one of amazing grace, joy and celebration against the backdrop of intense suffering and darkness which is gaining greater and greater media attention (AP filming, Liberation 2-page spread, Swiss film crew with 10-EU-country-coverage, *etc.*). We rejoice with him in his newfound joy.

*For more information, please contact these individuals directly or visit the Victims Association website:*

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**The Association of Khmer Rouge Victims in Cambodia**—*the first association based in Cambodia to be registered with the Ministry of Interior and the first to be recognized by the ECCC Victims Support Section and independent of any political or religious affiliation*—is a network of survivors of the 1975-79 killing fields who are joined in the fellowship of suffering, in the demand for justice, and in the work for a just peace. The members of the Victims Association are from overseas and spread across the provinces and capital of Cambodia, coming together as a result of the public forums conducted by its Founder, and now its president Ms. Theary C. SENG and Victims Outreach Manager Mr. SOK Leang since 2007. They include widows and orphans; former child soldiers and former prisoners; hard-working farmers and middle-class city-dwellers; well-known actresses playwrights, authors and journalists; as well as teachers, translators, security guards, taxi drivers, *inter alia*. Among the other members of the Victims Association is the **Civil Parties of Orphans Class**, a special grouping pre-dating the AKRVC founding when introduced officially in the Pre-Trial Chamber hearing of Nuon Chea in Feb. 2008, and since officially recognized by the ECCC Victims Support Section and a party to the Extraordinary Chambers Case File No. 002 against the senior Khmer Rouge leaders.

[www.akrvictims.org](http://www.akrvictims.org)