



## **The UN Secretary-General's remarks at Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia**

**Phnom Penh, 27 October 2010**

Your Excellency Mr. Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia,  
Mr. Tony Kranh, Acting Director of Administration of the ECCC,

Mr. Knut Rosandhaug, Deputy Director of ECCC Administration and Coordinator of Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials,  
Ms. Patricia O'Brien, the UN Legal Counsel

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for this warm welcome.

I have followed your work, closely and with keen interest ... as have many, many others around the world.

Patricia O'Brien, visiting this past April, gave me a full report on your work.

I must tell you: she was full of praise for your dedication and professionalism.

And so, now, it is a pleasure and a privilege to be here myself.

From my first day in office, I made the fight against impunity a top UN priority.

Accountability ... justice ...

After visiting the Rwanda Genocide Memorial, I was firmly resolved in my commitment and wrote in the guest book the words, "never again."

I have sought to make these the touchstones of my tenure as Secretary-General.

Your work, at this Court, is vital to that mission.

Each of you ... regardless of your job title or level of seniority ... is helping to advance that cause.

You do extraordinary work under extraordinarily challenging circumstances.

The international community attaches tremendous importance to your efforts.

It is almost impossible to describe what took place in Cambodia during the 1970s.

It is essential ... fundamentally important ... that we insist on accountability for those shocking crimes.

As a young person at the time, I was horrified.

The sheer scale of the killings ... the torture ... the incomprehensible inhumanity.

That is why I am so strongly committed to supporting you.

I emphasized this in my meeting this morning with Prime Minister Hun Sen.

We discussed the need for this Court to receive the full cooperation of the government. There should be complete respect for its judicial independence.

I underlined the United Nations' firm support for these important principles.

As with all of the UN-assisted criminal tribunals, it is not possible to try all offenders at every level of responsibility.

Nevertheless, putting the senior Khmer Rouge leaders on trial, even 30 years after, is itself a powerful message ...

A message that impunity will not be tolerated ... neither by the people of Cambodia and their government, nor by the United Nations and the international community.

Already, this court has important achievements.

One milestone is the conviction and sentencing of Kaing Guek Eav ... known as "Duch" ... to 35 years in jail for crimes against humanity.

This victory is significant — not only for the many thousands of people who died or were imprisoned in Toul Sleng prison, but also for survivors everywhere. They can see justice being done.

Cambodians want to see justice done. That is why 31,000 of them personally attended the trial, and many more watched from afar.

It also showed the wish of the Cambodian people and government to bring a sense of closure and reconciliation to this harrowing chapter in their history.

The indictment of the four most senior surviving leaders of the Khmer Rouge for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and offences under the 1956 Cambodian Criminal Code is another landmark.

This is a significant moment for the ECCC.

Beyond all doubt, the court has shown that it is capable of prosecuting complex international crimes in accordance with international standards.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ECCC has a unique structure among the UN-assisted tribunals.

It is a Cambodian court, fully within Cambodian jurisdiction. Yet it has international participation and assistance from the United Nations.

This is a source of strength, but it also brings challenges.

It is only natural that these parallel structures lead at times to differences of opinion and approach.

This is why the Agreement between the Royal Government of Cambodia and the United Nations lays down procedures for dealing with such problems.

The ability of the Court to resolve them through an independent judicial process, free from political influence, is one of its greatest assets.

Many of you may be worried about the financing of the Court. Let me assure you that the United Nations is working with the Government and principal donors to ensure that this work can continue uninterrupted until the completion of the Court's mandate.

I have appointed a Special Expert, Mr. Clint Williamson, to assist on all matters related to the ECCC. He has visited Phnom Penh twice, and has traveled to capitals in Asia and Europe in pursuit of funding. We are also trying to build on the outcome of the funding conference here in Phnom Penh in September.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would also like to commend the work of the Independent Counsellor, Mr. Uth Chhorn. After a difficult period in which allegations were made about corruption in the ECCC Administration, last year the Government and the United Nations agreed to establish this position. This was a breakthrough that sends a message: the Administration will not tolerate any form of corruption within the Court.

It is clear that Mr. Chhorn is doing an excellent job. He is an independent person to whom all staff can take any concern, informally and confidentially. He has already

reported on two complaints. I take this as an indication that the process is working and that he enjoys your confidence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have come far. This Court's success is a tribute to all of you working here.

Each of you plays his or her part: drivers, translators, administrators, prosecutors, judges ... national and international staff alike.

You are building an invaluable historical legacy.

You are helping the people of Cambodia continue the process of reconciliation and build a peaceful and prosperous future.

Your work is vital in the world's fight against impunity.

Tomorrow I will visit the Toul Sleng Genocide Museum — an epicenter of Cambodia's tragedy.

I go there as a pilgrimage ... as a duty that I embrace ... a necessary stop for the Secretary-General of an Organization dedicated to protecting people all around the world from the sort of brutality seen here in Cambodia.

That is our most basic and elemental promise to the people of the world.

There should no more such sorrow ... no more such savagery ...

And in their place: rights for all ... dignity for all ... safety for all.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again, you have my great respect and appreciation.

I am determined that the United Nations will do everything in its power to support you.

Let us work, together, for your continuing success.

Let us send a powerful signal to anyone, anywhere, who might commit such crimes in the future.

Never again.

Thank you.