

**ECCC: The role of ASEAN**

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In his recent address on May 25, 2010, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon praised the efforts of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal and reiterated its importance for Cambodia and the international community at large. It is without a doubt that the tribunal is vital for Cambodia's long road to recovery from years of genocide and decades of civil war. Likewise, this tribunal also promises to end one of the worse cases of impunity which existed for more than a quarter century: atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge regime from April 1975-January 1979 that claimed two million lives and displaced nearly the entire population.

Cambodians have waited patiently for justice and they must not be denied it any longer. As ASEAN members are aware of, the tribunal currently lacks the funds needed to complete its trials. A sudden ending to the tribunal resulting from insufficient funds would be a disaster in the justice-seeking process and also an embarrassment for the international community's commitment to protecting human rights.

Since officials and staff began work in 2006, the tribunal has wrapped up its first case involving former S-21 prison chief Duch in November 2009 (verdict expected in late July 2010) and is presently working on Case 002 involving the four highest level Khmer Rouge leaders still alive: Noun Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary, and Ieng Thirith. During its three years of operation, the tribunal has overcome many serious challenges and has improved in its outreach to survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime allowing over 31,000 Cambodians to directly observe Duch's trial hearing. It is expected that many more Cambodians will observe the trial hearings of Case 002 given the prominence of the four defendants. Additionally, the trials of former of Khmer Rouge leaders has helped to promote national discussions of the atrocities during that era, thereby breaking a long and deeply painful silence borne by millions of survivors. Lastly on a global scale, the tribunal can serve as an effective model for other internationalized criminal tribunals due to its relative low cost, speedy progress, and victim outreach, as noted by his Excellency Mr. Chan Tani, Secretary of the State of the Office of the Council of Ministers of Cambodia at the pledging conference on May 25, 2010. Thus, it is imperative that the tribunal has the necessary funds to continue this valuable work.

I therefore call upon ASEAN member states to answer Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's call for pledge contributions to the tribunal and suggest additionally other ways to provide support. As a fellow ASEAN member nation, Cambodia hopes that other member states will show their support for human rights in the region and in the world, by providing much needed assistance for the Khmer Rouge tribunal. As of present, no member nation has done so.

For the sake of justice for millions of Cambodians, national healing, strengthening relations among ASEAN members, and support of the international human rights regime, it is greatly hoped that ASEAN members will support its neighbor in their effort to rebuild a stronger and more just society.