

VILLAGERS IN KANDAL PROVINCE REACT TO SCREENING OF DUCH JUDGEMENT

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By Michael Saliba, J.D., and Tyler Nims, J.D., Center for International Human Rights, Northwestern University School of Law



Villagers watch Judge Nil Nonn read Duch Judgment

As news of the judgment against Kaing Guek Eav (alias Duch) began to sink into the minds of the Cambodian people, villagers in the Kandal province who were unable to watch the verdict live gathered at the local pagoda to for a replay of the judgment. The screening was hosted by the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) as part of an extensive outreach program that included live screenings and replays of the reading of the

judgment in pagodas, local schools, and cafes in seven Cambodian provinces. These screenings are only the latest in a long series of outreach efforts organized by DC-Cam to increase awareness of the history and atrocities of the Democratic Kampuchea regime across the country.

The replay screening attended by CTM at Koh Veng Keo Andret in the Koh Thom district drew a large crowd of mostly older Cambodians, including the village chief and Him Huy, a resident of the local commune and former Khmer Rouge guard at the Toul Sleng prison (S-21). Also in attendance was a camera crew from the BBC. Yet the key teenage demographic was unfortunately unable to watch the judgment live on TV or at DC-Cam screening due to a three-day-long high school exam. Many consider the overlap a serious



Local boys observe the BBC with curiosity

oversight on the part of the ECCC.

After DC-Cam representatives explained the workings of the tribunal, the villagers sat quietly in front of a large screen in the middle of the pagoda and watched intently as the president of the trial chamber, Judge Nil Nonn, summarized Duch's crimes and pronounced his fate. In the background, candles burned at an altar. After the viewing, a villager arose from the crowd and announced that his father was one of the many victims who perished at S-21. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the verdict, which he thought should have been the maximum sentence of life in prison, stressing that even the maximum sentence could not bring his father back and take away the pain that he still endures today. Other villagers echoed his sentiments.

Next, Him Huy rose to address his former neighbors. As one-time chief of the guards at Tuol Sleng, Huy bears a measure of responsibility for the deaths of some S-21 and Choeng Ek victims. He told the villagers the story of his involvement with the Khmer Rouge and interactions with Duch. Huy, who testified against Duch at the ECCC, agreed that Duch should have received a longer sentence.



Former S-21 guard Him Huy (left) addresses his community.

In the early afternoon, after most of the villagers had filed out of the pagoda, one elderly man stayed behind to recount for DC-Cam and CTM the story of his forced labor at a nearby Khmer Rouge work camp. In an animated and poignant interview, he spoke of the hardship he suffered and the deaths of several siblings from starvation and overwork.