



អង្គជំនុំជម្រះវិសាមញ្ញក្នុងតុលាការកម្ពុជា

Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia
Chambres extraordinaires au sein des tribunaux cambodgiens

**ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា
ជាតិ សាសនា ព្រះមហាក្សត្រ**

Kingdom of Cambodia
Nation Religion King
Royaume du Cambodge
Nation Religion Roi

Phnom Penh, 22 September 2022

PRESS RELEASE ON BEHALF OF THE CO-PROSECUTORS

Today, the Supreme Court Chamber upheld convictions against Khieu Samphan - Head of State of Democratic Kampuchea and one of the most senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge - for genocide, crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. These convictions relate to the nationwide extrajudicial executions of the regime’s perceived opponents, including well over 12,000 men, women and children imprisoned, tortured and killed in S-21 (Tuol Sleng) in the centre of Phnom Penh; the unlawful imprisonment of perceived enemies in security centres across Cambodia; the enslavement of the population in worksites and cooperatives throughout the country; forced marriages and forced sexual intercourse in the context of forced marriage; persecution of Buddhists and the Cham community, as well as former Khmer Republic officials; and the genocidal campaign directed against Cambodia’s long-settled ethnic Vietnamese population.

The Supreme Court Chamber’s judges upheld a range of findings made by the trial judges in their meticulously detailed trial judgment, which runs to 3,900 pages in its Khmer version. Today’s appeal judgment, and the trial judgment itself, contain a wide range of findings about the depth and extent of the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975 to 1979. The leaders of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, including Khieu Samphan, prohibited the practice of all religions, emptied Cambodia’s cities and towns and enslaved its people, abolished money and markets, and forcibly collectivised the population. It attempted to break traditional family bonds, forcing strangers to marry and consummate their union under threat of reprisal. The regime summarily executed tens if not hundreds of thousands of innocent citizens. In a misguided effort to create an agrarian utopia, it put millions to work on ill-conceived rice-growing and irrigation projects. Most were underfed and denied proper medical help and hundreds of thousands died from the inevitable malnutrition and exhaustion.

The scale of these crimes was immeasurably vast. In the face of such crimes, no court could bring full justice to all victims, nor hold accountable all those responsible. But, thanks to the efforts of so many Cambodians and their international colleagues, who diligently worked to assist judges and to represent the defence, the prosecution and civil parties for so many years, there was a measure of justice for the millions who suffered and died at the hands of the Khmer Rouge.

On this historic day, we acknowledge the courage of the hundreds of witnesses and Civil Party victims who came forward to provide evidence to this Court. In doing so, many had to relive events that caused them immense pain and suffering. We particularly acknowledge the survivors of sexual violence, who, by agreeing to give evidence, had to revisit ordeals that had seriously violated their personal dignity. Without their courage, the judges of this Court would have been deprived of evidence that has proved essential in establishing the truth concerning the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge.

We are grateful to all Cambodians for their participation in the proceedings, over 230,000 of whom came to this court in person to follow proceedings from the public gallery.

We also acknowledge today the efforts of the many Cambodians and foreigners, who worked tirelessly, before and during the lifetime of this Court, to locate, preserve and analyse thousands of prisoner lists, meeting records, internal communications, publications and photographs created by the Khmer Rouge authorities themselves. Those contemporaneous records were cited and relied upon by all parties. They were a source of evidence of incalculable value on which this Court could safely rely in its efforts to uncover the truth about the organised, deliberate and systematic crimes of the Khmer Rouge leadership. That contemporaneous evidence is an insurmountable barrier to those who might one day seek to play down the scale and systematic nature of the crimes. Today's judgment, and the other judgments in this case and in its predecessors, Cases 002/01 and 001, will forever stand as a bulwark against revisionism.

This Court has made an immeasurable contribution to the global effort to combat impunity for mass atrocity crimes. It has strengthened respect for the rule of law in Cambodia and helped to heal the wounds of the past, allowing the people of this country to look to the future. It has reinforced the principle that those responsible for atrocities cannot evade justice forever, and will be held accountable.