

**Embargoed for Release
June 8, 2011**

CONTACT

In Cambodia: Phuong Pham: 012 894 452
ppham1@berkeley.edu or drph2v@gmail.com

Mychelle Balthazard: 092 650 040
mbalthazard@ix.netcom.com

Second National Survey Reveals Positive Trends in Knowledge and Perception of the Khmer Rouge tribunal; But Cambodians Want to Know More. On the Eve of the Second Trial, Outreach Efforts should Continue

Phnom Penh— Two years after the first national survey, Cambodians, younger and older, are more aware and know more about the Khmer Rouge Tribunal and the Khmer Rouge regime. According to a second national survey conducted by the Human Rights Center at the University of California, Berkeley, perceptions of the court remain positive and have even improved in the last two years, with more than a 10% increase in the percentage of people who believed the Court would help rebuild trust in Cambodia and promote national reconciliation, and an 8% increase in the number of people who believed the Court is neutral.

Half the adult population (54%) knew that Duch was on trial and one in ten was able to state accurately for how many years the Trial Chamber had sentenced Duch to prison and to state accurately how many years he will spend in prison; 77 percent of those surveyed felt they were little or moderately informed about the Extraordinary Chambers of the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), a joint Cambodian-international tribunal established in 2006 to try top Khmer Rouge leaders.

“These findings indicate that more information about the court is needed” said Phuong Pham, lead author and Director of Research at the UC Berkeley Human Rights Center. “On the eve of the ECCC’s second trial, a more complicated and difficult trial, outreach efforts should continue and increase to maximize the Cambodian population's understanding of this important trial.”

The report, “After the First trial,” reveals Cambodians still have high expectations of the Khmer Rouge tribunal. Over three-quarters of respondents (compared to 68% in 2008) believed the ECCC would have a positive effect on the victims of the Khmer Rouge and/or their families such as bringing justice (37% compared to 2% in 2008) and helping victims feel better, have less anger, or help relieve the pain and suffering endured during the Khmer Rouge period (25%). But 9 percent indicated that the Court would have a negative impact, such as reminding victims too much of their past, or sentences that are not perceived as harsh enough.

Of those survey respondents who had heard about the ECCC the main sources of information were radio (73%) and television (72%). Forty-seven percent reported having seen a TV program on the ECCC, and among them, one out of two, had specifically seen "Duch on Trial".

“The media remained an important vehicle for information. As the second trial begins, live proceedings on television, weekly summaries of trial proceedings and opening up the court to Cambodians should resume to ensure information dissemination to a large portion of the Cambodian population,” said Mychelle Balthazard, a co-author of the report. Patrick Vinck added that “because legal language and proceedings could be difficult to understand for people outside the legal profession, interviews with court judges and staff should be commonplace during and after the trials to help explain complicated legal and judicial concepts and more importantly the verdicts to the public.”

The report, “After the First Trial,” calls on the ECCC to ensure transparency at the ECCC and address political interference with the justice system. The report also recommends that educational materials combining historical texts and visual materials from the trials be created to educate the population about the Khmer Rouge period as a part of the court’s legacy.

Research for “After the First Trial” was conducted in December 2010 among 125 randomly selected communes across the 24 provinces of Cambodia. Sample size was 1,000 adults 18 years of age or older. By the time of the survey, one trial, trial of Kaing Guek Eav (Duch), former head of the notorious Toul Sleng prison, was completed; the ruling is currently in appeal. The second trial of Khmer Rouge senior leaders, Nuon Chea, Ieng Sary, Ieng Thirith and Khieu Samphan, is scheduled to begin on June 27 2011.

The UC Berkeley Human Rights Center promotes human rights and international justice worldwide and trains the next generation of human rights researchers and advocates. More information is available at:

<http://hrc.berkeley.edu>

Report is available via email – please contact ppham1@berkeley.edu

Pham PN, Vinck P, Balthazard M, Hean S, (2011). After the First Trial: A Population-Based Survey on Knowledge and Perceptions of Justice and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley.