

## THE DC-CAM EXHIBITION 2010/2011: Art, History, and the Khmer Rouge Legacy

In the fourth quarter of 2010, DC-Cam will conduct six activities focused on educating people about the Khmer Rouge regime and the tribunal through art and community development. These activities combine the legacy of history with the power of imagery to communicate the struggles of the past and present, while helping to foster education and hope for the future.

### 1) *“UNTAC Elections and the Khmer Rouge” Exhibition in Thailand*

In early October, DC-Cam will mount an exhibition at Chulalongkorn University on the role of the Khmer Rouge during the period of UNTAC. The opening of the exhibition will follow a lecture given by DC-Cam Director Youk Chhang at the university. The event will take place one month prior to multi-party elections in Burma scheduled for November 7, 2010. Burma has been ruled by a military regime since 1989 and has been heavily criticized for the oppression of its people.

In 1992 the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was created as part of the UN effort to end a decade long civil war between the Khmer Rouge and the State of Cambodia under the 1991 Paris Peace Accords. UNTAC administered the first-ever democratic elections in Cambodia on May 1993 with a high 90% voter turnout of approximately 4 million people. Left out of the political reconstruction process however, the Khmer Rouge boycotted the elections and continued several more years of fighting with the new government. Thus a common critique of the UNTAC period is the failure to resolve the Khmer Rouge problem, in particular the failure to disarm and demobilize the Khmer Rouge. Further, the Khmer Rouge were not held accountable for the brutal crimes committed under Democratic Kampuchea. Nonetheless, UNTAC was a pivotal moment in Cambodia’s modern history, prompting some to draw comparisons to the present situation in Burma in hopes of gaining insight on Burma’s prospects for democratization.

### 2) *“Reflections” and “Case 002” at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum*

The “Reflections: Democratic Kampuchea and Beyond” exhibition will reopen in November at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum after suffering serious damage from flooding and a collapsed roof from during a rain storm in early August. The exhibition first opened in April 2008 in three buildings of the museum. The Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum has provided

space and support for two DC-Cam exhibitions per year in the past several years. The museum is visited by about 300 people each day.

As visitors walk from panel to panel, they are able to travel back in time to witness one of Cambodia's darkest eras. The exhibition includes both images revealing the horrific nature of the regime as well as those depicting the everyday life of all groups of people living under the regime- April 17<sup>th</sup> or new people, base people, cadre, soldier, and leaders. While focused on the Khmer Rouge period, the exhibition also chronologically extends to modern day Cambodia.

This exhibition is one of two, the second being "Case 002: Who Are the Khmer Rouge leaders to be Judged?" based on a DC-Cam booklet. The purpose of this exhibition, like the booklet, is to provide biographic and photographic information on the four most senior Khmer Rouge leaders still alive today who will be tried in Case 002 of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. Visitors are also presented with basic information about the charges brought against the defendants. Many ordinary Cambodians, and foreigners alike, are unfamiliar with the life and crimes of Noun Chea, Ieng Sary, Ieng Thirith, and Khieu Samphan. The exhibition therefore will play a significant role in educating people about the senior leaders and as such, engage them in the justice-seeking process.

### **3) "Case 002" Exhibition Opening at Rutgers University**

The "Case 002: Who Are the Khmer Rouge leaders to be Judged?" exhibition will also open at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey in collaboration with the Center for the Study of Genocide, Conflict Resolution, and Human Rights. The event will be attended by the UN Special Advisor on the Prevention on Genocide. This opening continues the Center's past efforts to educate students in America about the atrocities committed under Democratic Kampuchea with the first exhibition, "The Night of the Khmer Rouge," having been launched in April of 2008.

### **4) Separate Exhibitions on the Trial of Duch at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Northwestern University**

DC-Cam will launch a new exhibition focused on Case 001 of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal involving Kaing Geuk Eav, *alias* Duch. The exhibition will chronicle Duch's trial from its dramatic opening in which Duch apologized to victims and accepted responsibility, to the surprising verdict pronouncement. Relevant information such as Duch's background, the involvement of survivors, and the reactions of the Cambodian public will also be included.

Duch became the head of the prison in 1976 and was found guilty of direct and superior responsibility for the crimes committed at the site. An estimated 14,000 prisoners passed through the center with less than 20 surviving. In most cases, after prisoners were

interrogated and tortured they were taken to an open field where they were executed en masse. This field is now infamously known as the Choeung Ek Killing Fields.

DC-Cam has been assisting Northwestern University School of Law's Center for International Human Rights in its preparations to create its own exhibition on Case 001 in the form of material support, namely supplying some of the images, videos, documents, and audio files that will be included in the exhibition. The political life of former S-21 prison head Duch, the happenings at S-21 and two other prisons that Duch was in charge of, and his recently concluded trial are the focus of the exhibition. They reveal the cruelties and complexities of running one of the most notorious torture centers in the world.

DC-Cam and the Center for International and Human Rights are currently partners, along with support from the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center and B.J. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation, of a website called the Cambodia Tribunal Monitor ([www.cambodiatribunal.org](http://www.cambodiatribunal.org)) which uploads webcasts of the tribunal's live hearings in addition to providing updated information and expert commentary.

#### ***5) Minority Education in the Cham Community: Culture, History, and Religion***

The reconstruction and rebuilding of the Cham community is a vital part of Cambodia's overall stability and development. DC-Cam will conduct several activities in two Cham communities: (1) O-Trao village, Andaung Tmar commune, Prey Nup district, Sihanouk province, and (2) Svay Khleang village, Svay Khleang commune, Kroch Chhmar district, Kampong Cham province. These activities aim to promote education on the culture, history, and religion of the Cham minority.

The Cham minority first migrated to Cambodia in the 16<sup>th</sup> century after the Kingdom of Champa was defeated by the Lê Dynasty (present day Vietnam). Several waves of migration into the Khmer Empire followed, with the largest wave occurring in the 18<sup>th</sup> century after the collapse of the Kingdom of Champa. Under the Khmer Rouge regime, an estimated 100,000-400,000 Chams died. Like other Cambodians during that time, they were not allowed to practice their religion or any other cultural and traditional customs. Moreover, many mosques were destroyed or converted into storage houses, animal stables, or security centers. Since the fall of the regime, the Cham community has been working hard to rebuild itself and to reestablish its identity. Today, the Cham minority live predominantly in Cambodia with smaller populations in Laos and Vietnam.

In O-Trao village, DC-Cam plans to open an exhibition and create a museum and public library on the compound of a 1963 mosque. The mosque is located near the main road to Sihanoukville and is less than an hour drive from the coastal resort city. Directly across from the mosque are scenic mountains and open fields. There is also a large pond on the grounds of the mosque. As such, the mosque complex serves as a good tourist attraction for

both its educational and recreation value. Tourists on their way to Sihanoukville can stop by to visit the mosque, museum, and community center.

The mosque was damaged in 1973 during the civil war between the US-backed Lon Nol government and the Khmer Rouge. Since then, there have not been efforts to restore the mosque. Situated right of the mosque is a communal dining hall (4 meters by 10 meters) that was built during Democratic Kampuchea. The dining hall will be turned into an exhibition hall. Behind the mosque stands a small old building that is currently used as a storage facility. The first activity conducted will be the opening of the “Case 002: Who Are the Khmer Rouge Leaders to be Judged” exhibition at the exhibition hall. Later activities center on the preservation or conversion of existing buildings. The mosque itself will be renovated and beautified with flower gardens. The exhibition hall will be attached to a small museum or enclosed by it. The storage facility will be transformed into a public library.

Two construction projects and one exhibition will take place in Svay Khleang village near the site of a 200-year old *seun* (*matara* in the Cham language). This ancient Muslim tower was used to announce prayer times and observe the moon to determine the beginning and end of Ramadan. The local community requested assistance from DC-Cam to restore the *matara*, help construct a side entrance 95 meters long, and build a wall 85 meters long to safeguard against flooding due to rising water from the nearby Mekong River. In the letter co-written by the village chief Nor Nim and *hakem* Soh Min, the goal of this assistance is to “repair and maintain our ancestor’s historical legacy in order to preserve this unique work so that the young Cham generation understands its value and advantages.”

Further, DC-Cam plans to renovate two 100-year old houses located several meters left of the *seun*. The son of the owner of the houses, Ibrihim Math, has consented to DC-Cam transforming one of them into a local museum and another into a community learning center. The museum will display exhibitions focused on the Cham minority- its culture, religion, politics, and present day situation- and relevant issues such as the Khmer Rouge tribunal. The first exhibition displayed there will be “Case 002: Who Are the Khmer Rouge Leaders to be Judged?” The community learning center will provide activities for children, public computers, and classes on Islamic teachings.

## **6) Genocide Education Slogan Banners**

DC-Cam will hang anti-genocide slogans across all 1,700 high schools in Cambodia. Each banner contains two slogans that both memorialize the tragedy of Democratic Kampuchea and promote post-genocide reconciliation. They read: (1) “Talking about experiences during the Khmer Rouge regime is to promote reconciliation and to educate children about forgiveness and tolerance;” and (2) “Learning about the history of Democratic Kampuchea is to prevent genocide.” Possible locations for the banner include the front wall of the school building, near the school’s flag pole, or in front of the school yard or garden.

Two high schools, Russei Keo High School and Indra Devi High School, will first display the banner on October 1, 2010 when students return to school. The ceremony to mount the slogans will be presided by Her Excellency Tun Sa-In, Under-secretary of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport. Later in early 2011, DC-Cam will distribute banners to other high schools across Cambodia.

DC-Cam hopes that the two slogans will serve as a “genocide educational memorial” to Cambodia’s tragedy that claimed nearly two million lives from 1975-1979. These slogans remind us of the critical relationship between education, memory and history in genocide prevention. These slogans complement DC-Cam and the Ministry of Education’s current multi-stage nationwide Genocide Education Project which began in 2005. Thus far, the project has published the first-ever textbook on Democratic Kampuchea (*A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)* by Dy Khamboly), a Teacher’s Guidebook, and a Student Workbook; conducted a national teacher training workshop led by well-known international and Cambodian scholars and experts; and implemented provincial and local teacher training workshops throughout the country.

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