

ECCC – OCP AND VICTIMS UNIT PRESS RELEASE
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**THE ECCC IS PROCESSING HUNDREDS OF
COMPLAINTS FROM KHMER ROUGE VICTIMS**

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) is processing and beginning to respond to hundreds of complaints that have been submitted by Cambodians about crimes that occurred during the period of Democratic Kampuchea. The complaints have been received and analyzed, and the ECCC is in the process of notifying victims about the status of their complaints.

**MORE THAN 500 HUNDRED COMPLAINTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED AND
ANALYZED. THE COMPLAINANTS WILL RECEIVE OFFICIAL
ACKNOWLEDGMENT SOON**

Although the Court has been operational since July 2006, the ECCC has received most of the 500 plus complaints since October 2007. These complaints have largely come from individuals who have been made aware of the right to be involved in the Court process through the outreach of civil society organizations, which have played an important role in ensuring victim participation. The victim complaints have all been scanned, processed and analyzed. Properly completed complaint forms are being forwarded to the appropriate offices within the ECCC for further action.

The Co-Investigating Judges will ultimately receive those complaints that provide information that relates to their current investigation and those complaints that request participation in the proceedings as a civil party. The Co-Prosecutors receive those complaints that do not relate to the current judicial investigation so that they can determine whether to open a new investigation. Where complaints do not contain enough information for the Court to act, for example where the complaint does not describe clearly when, where and what crimes are alleged to have occurred, the Court will contact these people for further information. Of the over 500 complaints received, currently about a fifth are missing key information.

Having analyzed these complaints the Court is now in the process of advising each and every complainant about the status of their complaint and how the Court intends to use it in the ECCC process. "Information received from victims is crucial to our success," says Robert Petit, one of the ECCC's Co-Prosecutors. "The Court is lucky that so many people have come

forward and submitted complaints, because it gives us a lot of information to work with. It is important to realize, however, that it takes time to analyze each complaint and see how it relates to our investigations.”

THE VICTIMS UNIT IS FACILITATING THE PARTICIPATION OF VICTIMS

The Victims Unit, which began operation in January 2008, is the first point of contact between victims and the Court. While some staff have already been hired, the Unit is expected to be fully operational in the next 3 weeks, when the Head of the Victims Unit will begin work. The Unit will assist victims and those helping them to file complaints and civil party applications. It will also help them to locate lawyers, organize the collective representation of groups of victims, and facilitate their participation in the proceedings. The Unit is also consulting with civil society organizations and is currently developing materials designed to explain these processes in a clear manner, including clarifying the difference between complainants and Civil Parties.

“The response from victims so far has been very encouraging,” said Gabriela Gonzalez Rivas, the Deputy Head of the Victims Unit. “The ECCC is the first court in the history of international criminal law to offer victims full participation in the proceedings, and everyone at the Court is working hard to ensure that this participation is meaningful for them. The Court will acknowledge the receipt of each and every complaint as soon as possible, but we also need to make sure that each one is given the careful, individual attention it deserves.”