

## Groundbreaking Web Site to Chronicle Cambodia War Crimes Tribunal

Cambodia Tribunal Monitor ([www.CambodiaTribunal.org](http://www.CambodiaTribunal.org)) to provide webcasts, news, information and expert commentary on tribunal created to try Khmer Rouge

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CHICAGO – A new Web site has been launched that will provide ongoing coverage and commentary on the Cambodia war crimes tribunal, now in its early stages of work near Phnom Penh. The Cambodia Tribunal Monitor, now available at [www.CambodiaTribunal.org](http://www.CambodiaTribunal.org), will serve as a leading source of news and information on the upcoming trials of senior officials of the Khmer Rouge regime for atrocity crimes.

Throughout the court proceedings, the Web site will offer news updates, video excerpts of the trials and guest commentaries by leading international experts on the recent history of Cambodia, politics, human rights and international law.

From April 1975 to January 1979, an estimated 1.7 million Cambodian citizens died under the Khmer Rouge regime. After nearly 10 years of negotiations, a special war crimes tribunal has commenced near Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), as the special Cambodian court is formally known, will oversee the proceedings and is a joint partnership of the United Nations and the Royal Government of Cambodia.

In addition to archiving daily international news articles, the Web site also provides background information on the history of the Khmer Rouge and ECCC. Important resources such as court documents and bibliographies of scholarly articles and books are also posted. Once the trials formally begin, which is estimated for early 2008, *Cambodia Tribunal Monitor* will provide daily tape-delayed video of the court proceedings, as well as video of interviews with Cambodian citizens documenting their reaction to the events.

The *Cambodia Tribunal Monitor* will also feature essays written by leading experts on the subject. The commentary section opens with companion essays by David Scheffer, Northwestern University law professor and former U.S. Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues, and Youk Chhang, executive director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam). In their essays, Scheffer and Chhang set the stage for the tribunal and reflect on why the trials are important to both the international community and the Cambodian people.

“Cambodia has had enough justice administered behind closed doors. It is essential that the ECCC provide some answers ... about who is accountable and why,” Chhang writes. “The tribunal must leave people with a judgment, something concrete they can take away and debate, and something they feel was done in fairness to all.”

When discussing the importance of the ECCC, Chhang speaks from personal experience as he lived in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge regime. During this time, his family was relocated to the countryside and into forced labor. Several of his family members were killed by the regime, including his sister and brother-in-law.

In addition to the significance the ECCC represents to the Cambodian people, Scheffer points out that it will also be a closely observed by an international community of human rights and justice advocates.

“That fact alone [the existence of the ECCC] sends a powerful signal throughout the world that the international community is getting serious ... about accountability for atrocity crimes and that there is no stopwatch for justice,” writes Scheffer, who is currently the director of the Center for International Human Rights at the Northwestern University School of Law.

In the coming months, commentary and insight from more than a dozen additional contributors will be added to the site.

The *Cambodia Tribunal Monitor* was developed by a consortium of academic, philanthropic and non-profit organizations committed to providing public access to the tribunal and open discussion throughout the judicial process. The academic manager and sponsor of the site is Northwestern University School of Law’s Center for International Human Rights, joined by co-sponsors Documentation Center of Cambodia and the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. The prime sponsor of the site is the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation.

The Web site concept was conceived by Illinois State Senator Jeff Schoenberg, a Chicago-area legislator who also advises the Pritzker family on its philanthropy. In January, Schoenberg participated in a trip sponsored by Build Cambodia, a U.S. based not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping Cambodians build their lives and society. As a result of the experience, Schoenberg enlisted the support of the aforementioned sponsors, and with their assistance the Cambodia Tribunal Monitor was created.

“The goal of this site is to provide broader public exposure to one of the greatest atrocities in modern history and the pursuit of justice that is now in front of us,” Schoenberg said. “Unfortunately, because these crimes were committed more than 30 years ago, there is a generation who knows nothing about this period of history. I encourage professors, teachers, students, historians, journalists and the general public to use *Cambodia Tribunal Monitor* to ensure that we don’t forget the past – and to demonstrate that in the end, justice prevails.”

In the coming months, certain portions of the site will be translated into Khmer and French.

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