

## UN expert urges Cambodia and the international community to speed up Khmer Rouge trials

GENEVA (14 March 2013) – The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, Surya P. Subedi, today urged the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), the Royal Government, international donors and the UN to expedite the Khmer Rouge trials, after the passing of Mr. Ieng Sary, one of the four accused currently before the Tribunal who died at the age of 87.

“I call upon all actors, including the international community at large, to renew the commitment to support the ECCC to complete its work with full independence,” Mr. Subedi stressed. “We owe it to the surviving victims of the Khmer Rouge, the families of the victims, and the whole of Cambodian society that continues to suffer from the impact of the Khmer Rouge to this day.”

Mr Sary was accused of crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes which stem from his role in the leadership of the Khmer Rouge during the period of Democratic Kampuchea. For decades, he avoided trial on these allegations. After defecting from the Khmer Rouge in 1996 he lived a comfortable life as a free citizen in Pailin province in Cambodia until his arrest in 2007 on an order of the ECCC. He was detained since that time until his death, as was his wife and co-accused in case 002, Ieng Thirith, who has been declared mentally unfit to stand trial.

“His death during the trial means he will not be finally judged,” the Special Rapporteur said. “Perhaps the justice process in this instance was too slow, but he was forced to answer the grave allegations against him in an open court. A justice system caught up with him even 30 years after the events. The tenacity of many people, but most of all the victims, is to thank for this.”

“We know from other instances of accountability processes around the world that, although a final judgment was not reached, the mere fact of seeing Ieng Sary forced to face his accusers will have brought some degree of comfort to the surviving victims of the Khmer Rouge, the families of the victims, and the whole of Cambodian society that continues to suffer from the impact of the Khmer Rouge to this day,” Mr. Subedi noted.

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*Professor Surya P. Subedi was appointed by the UN Human Rights Council as the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Cambodia in March 2009. As Special Rapporteur, he is independent from any government or organisation and serves in his individual capacity. He is currently Professor of International Law at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom.*

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