



**Statement of Thomas Hammarberg,  
Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General  
for Human Rights in Cambodia, on the 18 April massacre  
of residents of Chnouk Trou village in Kompong Chhnang province**

I wish to express my sincerest condolences to the survivors and the families of the victims of the 18 April massacre of residents of Chnouk Trou village in Kompong Chhnang province. I urge the Cambodian government, the Cambodian Red Cross and other relevant organizations to provide the greatest possible assistance to these persons at this most difficult moment.

I also encourage the authorities to conduct a speedy investigation into this heinous crime, and to identify the perpetrators and prosecute them. The attack has thus far taken the lives of 23 persons and injured at least 20 others, many seriously. Many of the victims were women and children. It resulted in the destruction of approximately 20 houses, and forced at least 45 families to flee from the village to ensure their safety. I understand that there were many eyewitnesses who may be able to provide relevant information about the perpetrators to the authorities.

This attack appears to have been primarily directed against Vietnamese villagers. At least 13 of them were killed, along with eight Khmer and two Chams. I am particularly concerned that the attack took place in the pre-election period when ethnically and racially inflammatory language is once again being used by some politicians and political parties.

In the 1993 election period at least 139 persons of ethnic Vietnamese origin were killed. Most of these killings took place in and around the Tonle Sap area and thousands of ethnic Vietnamese residents of Cambodia were forced to flee. Since 1993 there have been a number of similar attacks, the worst of which were the killings of 13 persons in Piem So Village in Kandal province in 1994 and the killing of 13 other persons in Koh Keo village in Pursat province in 1996. I know of no arrest or prosecutions in any of these cases.

While most of these killings appear to have been carried out by persons affiliated with the Khmer Rouge, all Cambodian politicians and authorities have a responsibility in this regard. I therefore call on all political parties to condemn this massacre unequivocally and to instruct their members to refrain from using language which may incite similar attacks in the future. In particular, the use of ethnic or racial slurs in campaign statements or speeches should come to an immediate halt. Failure to do this may contribute to a climate in which further such attacks may be seen to be acceptable.

Phnom Penh, 4 May 1998