



Special Representative of the Secretary-General
for Human Rights in Cambodia

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Need to inject justice and accountability for Khmer Rouge period remains after death of Pol Pot, Special Representative Of Secretary-General Says 6 April 1998

Thomas Hammarberg, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for human rights in Cambodia, today said that the death of Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot did not remove the need to assist the Cambodian people in establishing justice for what happened from 1975-1979 -- the years the Khmer Rouge controlled the country.

Mr. Hammarberg said Cambodians were still traumatized by the horror of those years most people had lost close members of their family either through executions or starvation caused by the policies of the Khmer Rouge regime. He noted that several prominent members of the Khmer Rouge regime were still active.

The Special Representative is in the process of putting together a group of legal experts to address the issue. According to the General Assembly resolution of December 1997 their role will be to "evaluate the existing evidence and propose further measures, as a means of bringing about national reconciliation, strengthening democracy and addressing the issue of individual accountability". "Injecting justice and accountability for the Khmer Rouge period is an important step in breaking the cycle of impunity which even today remains a major problem in Cambodia," said Mr. Hammarberg.

Mr. Hammarberg said he envisaged a close cooperation between the Cambodian authorities and the international community in any process of providing justice for what happened in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge regime.

NOTE: Mr Hammarberg is currently en route to Cambodia for his eighth visit since being appointed Special Representative in 1996.