

20/08/2002



**Press Release
SG/SM/8341**

**SECRETARY-GENERAL REPLIES TO CAMBODIAN PRIME MINISTER'S
LETTER**

ON TRIAL OF KHMER ROUGE LEADERS

The following statement was issued today by the Spokesman for Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

Today, the Secretary-General wrote to Mr. Hun Sen, Prime Minister of Cambodia, on the issue of the trial of the Khmer Rouge leaders. The letter was in response to a letter from the Prime Minister to the Secretary-General.

Following the Secretary-General's decision of 8 February to end the negotiations on this matter, the Government of Cambodia has made statements indicating that the Government is prepared, in order to meet the concerns of the United Nations, to amend the Law on the Extraordinary Chambers to try the Leaders of Khmer Rouge.

It must be noted that following the Secretary-General's decision of 8 February to end the negotiations, certain Member States have engaged in a dialogue with the Government of Cambodia with a view to finding a solution that would put the United Nations in a position to be able to contribute to bringing the leaders of Khmer Rouge to justice. In late June, the Secretary-General received a telephone call from Mr. Hun Sen, after which he also received and responded to a letter from the Prime Minister. Subsequently, the Secretary-General received a second letter from the Prime Minister, to which he responded today.

In these communications the Secretary-General made it clear that in order for him to engage in further negotiations, he needs a clear mandate from either the General Assembly or the Security Council. It is the Secretary-General's view that it is now for Cambodia and interested Member States to pursue this matter in the General Assembly or the Security Council with a view to obtaining the appropriate mandate. If such a mandate were given, the Secretary-General would be prepared to engage in further talks with the Government in order to fulfil the mandate.

As a sovereign State, Cambodia has the responsibility for the trial while the international community, through the United Nations or otherwise, can help provided that the Government demonstrates its preparedness to ensure the observance of international standards of justice.