

AI Index: PRE 01/517/2011
10 October 2011

Cambodia: UN must act to safeguard future of Khmer Rouge Tribunal

Siegfried Blunk, the International Co-Investigating Judge at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), resigned, citing statements by the Cambodian government that could be perceived as attempted interference with the court's work. In reaction to this news, Amnesty International said:

“There is a strong perception that the Cambodian government has tried to influence, and thus subvert, the work of the ECCC. In particular the government has sought to limit the number of cases brought before the tribunal, where only a handful of individuals are being prosecuted for the death of more than a million people and torture, displacement and persecution on a massive scale,” said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Director.

“Any attempt by the Cambodian government to influence the work of the ECCC undermines the entire tribunal and therefore risks denying justice to the victims of the Khmer Rouge and to the Cambodian people as a whole. Political interference also jeopardises the unique opportunity for the ECCC to serve as a model of justice for the domestic courts in Cambodia,” said Sam Zarifi.

“It's vital that the UN acts to safeguard the tribunal's future, ensuring that it meets international fair trial standards of independence and impartiality. The UN should seek guarantees from the Cambodian government that it will not interfere in its proceedings and make clear that any attempts to influence the work of the ECCC will force the UN to review its involvement,” said Sam Zarifi.

Siegfried Blunk is the first high-ranking official to publicly cite apparent government interference in the Court's work as the reason for resigning from the ECCC.