



**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
PHNOM PENH**

MEDIA RELEASE

2 September 2020

Death of Kaing Guek Eav (alias Comrade Duch)

The Australian Government notes the death of Kaing Guek Eav (known as Comrade Duch), who died on 2 September while serving a life sentence for crimes committed while a member of the senior ranks of the Khmer Rouge, including as head of S-21 prison.

In 2010, the Trial Chamber of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) convicted Kaing Guek Eav for crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. These crimes included enslavement, torture, extermination and inhumane treatment.

“Australia’s thoughts are today with those who suffered at the hands of the Khmer Rouge and their families,” His Excellency Pablo Kang, Australian Ambassador to Cambodia said.

“Today will be a painful day for many but we hope the fact that Comrade Duch was brought to justice for his actions brings peace to some.”

Australia has supported the international criminal process that saw Kaing Guek Eav convicted of his crimes since 2003. Over that time, Australia has provided A\$44 million in funding to the ECCC. This included providing the opportunity for Cambodians to intern in the Office of the Co-Prosecutor at the courts.

“We are pleased that our assistance for the Khmer Rouge tribunal has helped survivors and families achieve recognition, supported Cambodians to understand their past, and assisted the world to ensure that atrocities such as those perpetrated by Comrade Duch never occur again,” Ambassador Kang said.

Between 1975 and 1979, over 1.6 million Cambodians died under the rule of the Khmer Rouge. The ECCC was established to hold those responsible to account for these deaths and other crimes. The Court also continues to promote national reconciliation through the recording of the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge and the work it does to acknowledge victims and survivors of this dark period of Cambodia’s past.

Australia is proud to have supported the work of the ECCC and remains committed to international norms for the protection and promotion of human rights both in Cambodia and across the globe.

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