

Friday, 01 July 2011

With Help, Cambodian-Americans Filing at Tribunal

Men Kimseng, VOA Khmer | Washington



Photo: Pin Sisovann, VOA Khmer

Cambodian-Americans gathered at Middlesex Community College, in Lowell, Massachusetts, to talk about Khmer Rouge issues in August 2010.

More Cambodian-Americans will be seeking a place at Khmer Rouge tribunal hearings, with the help of a US-based organization.

The [Center for Justice and Accountability](#) is helping organize applications for victims of the regime who fled to the US but who have the right under tribunal rules to file grievances and applications to be witnesses.

A team from the center is now in Cambodia to help move the process along, as the court moves toward a trial of four top leaders.

Henry Chhon is among about a dozen Cambodian-Americans to have filed at the UN-backed court with the help of the center.

He was recently accepted as a participant in the court's second case, to try senior leaders Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary and Ieng Thirith.

"I am happy I was accepted," Chhon said in an interview Wednesday.

A former soldier for the US-supported Lon Nol regime before the fall of Phnom Penh, Chhon said he was able to hide his past from the Khmer Rouge. His uncle, who had also been a Lon Nol soldier, was picked up by the regime and sent to a re-education camp, never to return.

His civil party application was originally denied by the court, but it was accepted on appeal and announced at a preliminary hearing Monday. He will be among nearly 1,700 other participants represented by lawyers in the court when a trial for the four leaders begins in earnest later this year.

"I feel calmer now that I am now able to speak out and participate in other activities with other survivors," he said. "I am satisfied that this trial is taking place."

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