



## **Anomalies plague long-awaited Khmer Rouge trial November 13, 2008**

*Nearly 30 years after nearly 2 million people died in Cambodia's killing fields, five senior Khmer Rouge officials are finally set to face justice. FRANCE 24's Cyril Payen takes a behind-the-scenes look at a much criticised trial.*

Cambodia's long-awaited Khmer Rouge trial threatens the regime's victims with lack of closure. The special court was set up in 2006 to prosecute crimes committed by senior Khmer Rouge leaders between 1975 and 1979, which resulted in the deaths of nearly 2 million people.

The tribunal was finally set up after contentious negotiations between the United Nations and the Cambodian government and comprises elements of Cambodian and international law.

However, delaying tactics and technical irregularities have slowed down the work of the court amid fears that many of the accused, who are aging and in ill health, may die before they can be brought to justice.

Today, after years of difficult talks, the five former senior members of the ultra-communist regime detained by the tribunal have yet to face their country and the international community and answer for their behaviour during Cambodia's darkest hours.

FRANCE 24's Cyril Payen followed the main protagonists of the trial. A special reportage will be broadcast during our programme "Reporters".

### **Vergès: Samphan's old Paris connection**

French lawyer Jacques Vergès, whose most famous clients include the terrorist Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, also known as "Carlos the Jackal" and Nazi Klaus Barbie, is representing Khieu Samphan, a former Khmer Rouge head-of-state he met during his youth in Paris.

Samphan is currently in pre-trial detention in Cambodia. Last week, the court's investigating judges refused to release former Khmer Rouge leader, citing "plausible reasons" to believe Samphan incited "murder, extermination, imprisonment, persecution and other inhumane acts constituting crimes against humanity and intentional homicide."

But in the sidelines of a debate organised by FRANCE 24, Vergès questioned the efficiency of the UN-backed court. “The end word is that, as things stand today, this tribunal is incapable of judging anybody,” he said.