



Kingdom of Cambodia
Nation Religion King

Office of the Council of Ministers
Press and Quick Reaction Unit

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**STATEMENT OF THE SPOKESPERSON
OF THE PRESS AND QUICK REACTION UNIT
OF THE OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

The international Co-Investigating Judge Siegfried Blunk unexpectedly announced his resignation from the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) on 9 October 2011. This serious blow to the Court interrupts its current process to issue the Closing Order on Cases 003 and 004 and will result in further delays and difficulties.

The unique formula of the ECCC, agreed through many long years of negotiation from 1997 between the United Nations and the Cambodian Government, is setting a new model for international justice. In Cases 001 and 002 the ECCC has achieved unprecedented records of public support and victim participation, without jeopardising peace and security throughout the country.

The United Nations General Assembly resolution of 18 December 2002 recognised “the legitimate concern of the Government and people of Cambodia in the pursuit of justice and national reconciliation, stability, peace and security”, and this was reaffirmed in the Agreement between the United Nations and the Royal Government of Cambodia signed in Phnom Penh on 6 June 2003, approved unanimously by Cambodia’s National Assembly and ratified on 19 October 2004. The Cambodian Government is obliged under the Constitution to safeguard this precious state of peace and national reconciliation, achieved only in the past decade after years of conflict and genocide.

Judge Blunk placed the blame for his resignation on the Cambodian Government, citing “pressure by Government officials” and “perceived ... attempted interference by Government officials” as evidenced by statements by several senior members of the Government, including the Prime Minister, expressing their opinion that the ECCC can and should complete its mandate with Cases 001 and 002. However, the Government has taken no action to hinder the investigation into Cases 003 and 004 and has left the decision in the hands of the ECCC as to whether to proceed with or dismiss any cases.

Blunk’s cited reason for resigning is belied by the fact that he assumed office on 1 December 2010, over a month *after* the Prime Minister’s statement to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, and he continued to work for almost a year in full cooperation with his counterpart, Cambodian Judge You Bunleng, towards a mutually agreed decision on Cases 003 and 004 even *after* the statement by the Minister of Information in May 2011, to which Blunk also refers in his resignation statement. Repeatedly and publicly throughout this year, Blunk stated that the two Co-Investigating Judges were working together well (see, for example, their statement of 26 May 2011: “The Co-Investigating Judges have worked independently from outside interference, will continue to resist all such attempts, and are resolved to defend their independence against outside interference, wherever it may come from.”)

In his complete volte-face from mutual collaboration to sudden resignation, accompanied by a denunciation of the Cambodian Government, strangely enough Blunk does not mention the recent crescendo of statements calling for the Co-Investigating Judges to resign because they were believed to be moving towards a decision to dismiss Cases 003 and 004. This was the culmination of a sustained campaign by international organisations (including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the Open Society Justice Initiative) alongside persistent media interference (led by the arch-conservative US newspaper *Wall Street Journal*) that have long opposed the ECCC, and over the past two years have exerted increasing pressure to discredit and undermine the ECCC, attempting to force it to charge more suspects.

Now Judge Blunk has bowed to their wishes and handed a victory to this long-standing campaign. This is no victory for the Cambodian people, who have put so much faith in the ECCC to bring long-awaited justice for the crimes of the Khmer Rouge.

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