



## **Victims of Khmer Rouge sex crimes want voice in court**

**Heng Reaksmey**

**December 7, 2011**

Family members of sexual assault victims under the Khmer Rouge say they want to have their voices heard at the UN-backed tribunal.

As the court undertakes its second trial to date, of Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan and Ieng Sary, judges have said sexual violence will not be counted specifically among the crimes they are tried for.

That is upsetting for people like Kong Vanna, 54, who said Wednesday his sister had been raped by four Khmer Rouge soldiers before she was killed.

“They have to be responsible for what they have done,” he said. “Those Khmer Rouge leaders should be sentenced to life in jail, not only for my family, but a lot of families of victims.”

Preap Phin, 45, said she was forced to watch as her sister was raped by Khmer Rouge soldiers. “I have only a body, but I have no feelings,” she said. “If I could take revenge on the Khmer Rouge leaders by my own hand, I would, but I will let the law punish them.”

The three leaders have been charged with war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and other atrocity crimes, but the court will not address the sexual violence undertaken by Khmer Rouge soldiers.

Im Sophea, outreach coordinator for the victims unit of the court, said judges must make decisions on who will testify before the court. Around 600 sexual abuse victims have filed complaints as civil parties, he said. Forced marriage will fall under the purview of this case, he added.

Doung Savorn, who is in charge of a gender-based violence program at the Cambodian Defenders Project, said in this case, 002, victims of sexual violence that do not fall under forced marriage will not testify. However, he encouraged such victims to speak out in public, beyond the court.