Media Statement

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Destruction of the Village at the Foot of Preah Vihear: Thai War Crimes and a Breach of International Law

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) today issues a report that analyzes the international legal implications of the recent events of 3 April 2009 at the Temple of Preah Vihear in the Kingdom of Cambodia. The recent events saw the village known as Psar Cheung Prasat (Market at the Foot of the Mountain) completely destroyed and the Preah Vihear Temple damaged by the armed forces of the Kingdom of Thailand. We will submit the report to the Royal Government of Cambodia for its urgent consideration.

The report considers recent events in the context of the historical dispute between Thailand and Cambodia regarding the ownership of the Preah Vihear Temple and adjacent territory; and rising tensions in the second half of 2008 that began after Cambodia requested the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to register the Preah Vihear Temple as a World Heritage Site. The recent events resulted in the complete destruction of the village and damage to the Preah Vihear Temple. Further to our investigations and consideration of the relevant

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international law, the report finds that it is probable that Thailand has breached international law and that its military and/or government personnel responsible for destroying the village and damaging the Preah Vihear Temple have committed war crimes. The Report recognizes the restraint of the Royal Government of Cambodia in reacting to the recent events, and makes a series of recommendations which include: offering further humanitarian assistance to the displaced residents of the village; requesting the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the United Nations (UN) or another neutral body to carry out further and detailed investigations into the recent events; and - should the findings of the report be corroborated - formally informing Thailand of its breach of international law and requesting fair compensation. The Report sets out also the possible option of initiating proceedings against Thailand at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and requesting the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the actions of the Thai military and/or government personnel involved in the recent events.

The report is available online at www.cchrcambodia.org.
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