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**Cambodian Center for Human Rights**

**CCHR Media Comment, Phnom Penh, 12 January 2012**  
**CCHR calls for the immediate appointment of KRT judge**

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) echoes the concerns of the United Nations (UN) about the stalled appointment of the new co-investigating judge at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. Today, it was reported in the *Phnom Penh Post* (*Delay in appointing judge worries UN*) that the spokesman for UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated in an email that the UN is concerned that more than three months after the resignation of the International Co-investigating Judge Siegfried Blunk, the Supreme Council of Magistracy (SCM) has not appointed the Reserve International Co-Investigating Judge, Laurent Kasper-Ansermet of Switzerland, to replace him. Pursuant to the agreement establishing the tribunal, in the event of the absence of an International Co-Investigating Judge, he or she shall be replaced by a Reserve International Co-Investigating Judge. All judges at the tribunal must be formally appointed by the SCM, the body constitutionally mandated to assist the King on the appointment of judges and prosecutors to all courts.

Former International Co-Investigating Judge Siegfried Blunk announced his resignation on 10 October 2011 citing numerous statements by government officials that could be perceived as interference into the investigations of Cases 003 and 004. There had been widespread concern that the Office of the Co-Investigating Judges was bowing to political pressure in relation to the investigations into Cases 003 and 004. On Tuesday 10 January 2012, the *Phnom Penh Post* (*Disorder in the court*) reported disagreement between the Cambodian Co-Investigating Judge You Bunleng and the Reserve International Co-Investigating Judge in relation to the release of information pertaining to Cases 003 and 004.

Commenting on the ongoing delay to officially appoint Judge Laurent Kasper-Ansermet, Ou Virak, CCHR President, stated:

*“After Judge Blunk’s resignation, the tribunal was at a crossroads where the only way to regain public confidence in the process was by revisiting the investigations into Cases 003 and 004 to ensure that they were full and frank. The failure of the Supreme Council of Magistracy to execute the formal approval process required for the International Co-Investigating Judge has done nothing to alleviate concerns of political interference that continue to mar Cases 003 and 004 and undermine the credibility of the court. The Supreme Council of Magistracy must meet immediately to approve the nomination of the Reserve International Co-Investigating Judge so that the two investigating judges can together undertake the work required to complete genuine, impartial investigations into Cases 003 and 004. If the tribunal’s door is shut without such investigations, the UN will have failed the victims of the Khmer Rouge.”*

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