

INVITATION

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Testimonial Ceremony

TESTIMONIAL CEREMONY

*with Civil Parties of Case 002 of the
Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC)*

Date: Friday 30th October 2015
Friday 13th November 2015

Time: 7:30am

Place: Choeung Ek (Killing Fields)

Agenda: 7:30 - 8:15 Prayers in front of the Choeung Ek Stupa
8:20 - 11:00 Delivery of testimonies in Samboua Meas Pagoda
Healing ceremony

Background

Testimonial Therapy (TT) is a short-term treatment for psychological trauma that was specifically developed to improve the coping ability of survivors as well as reduce their posttraumatic stress symptoms after experiencing torture and other forms of organized political violence. The TT treatment was first developed and described by a Chilean psychologist and psychiatrist in 1983 during Augusto Pinochet's repressive regime. It has since been successfully modified to incorporate essential cultural aspects in different settings around the world, including other Asian countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and the Philippines. The Transcultural Psychosocial Organization Cambodia (TPO Cambodia) has adapted TT by integrating traditional and religious practices led by Buddhist monks in local pagodas, which in turn, reinforce the power and significance of traditional coping and healing in the country's spirit-based culture.

During TPO Cambodia's TT, Khmer Rouge survivors are invited to process their traumatic experiences with a trained counselor during a series of confidential sessions. These sessions help survivors to restore, confront, and integrate their painful memories before committing them into a written testimony. A short version of these individual stories or testimonies are then read aloud during a Buddhist ceremony and finally given to the survivors by the monks after receiving their blessings. The ceremony takes place in presence of other survivors and an invited audience, or in presence of relatives, community members, local authorities and youth. Through the simple act of listening to the survivors' experience, the audience helps to validate and ameliorate their suffering. For the survivors, ceremonial prayers calm their ancestors' spirits and pay respect to the deceased. You are graciously invited to be a part of this healing ceremony.

TPO, in cooperation with the Victims Support Section of the ECCC (Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia) aims to improve access to legal and psychological services for Civil Parties which is generously funded by GIZ (Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit) and SF (Swiss Foundation).

For more information, please contact Mrs. Sokunnara (+855) 012 216 625 or Mrs. Solida 012 306 425
www.tpocambodia.org and www.facebook.com/tpocambodia