ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Justice is notoriously elusive in the aftermath of mass atrocities. In Cambodia, more than three decades after the demise of the Pol Pot regime, many survivors still seek some form of legal accountability. Almost all seek a better understanding of the tragedy that befell them and the healing that may come from a process that acknowledges, dignifies, and in some measure responds to their suffering. Many international actors, too, have engaged in the quest for justice, cognizant of the lingering stain of Khmer Rouge impunity on efforts to strengthen global accountability norms and promote the rule of law. This book emerges from our own efforts to advance law and meaning in the shadow of Khmer Rouge violence.

We focus on the most prominent official undertaking to address the Khmer Rouge legacy—the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC)—a hybrid judicial institution managed by the Cambodian Government and United Nations and tasked with putting former Khmer Rouge officials on trial. We endeavor to shed light on specific institutional features and practices that boost or inhibit a tribunal’s capacity to meet its many, and sometimes conflicting, mandates. As in other societies coping with violent pasts, trials are not the only ways to meet survivors’ needs or strengthen the law, but the ECCC is an integral part of Cambodia’s engagement with its troubled past. It also holds important lessons for other societies that prosecute mass crimes as part of broader transitional justice processes.

Conducting a detailed analysis of the ECCC would not have been possible without many helping hands. A number of current and former officials from the ECCC, United Nations, Cambodian Government, and other key states and non-governmental groups took time out of busy schedules to help us navigate this complex hybrid institution and the politics surrounding it. These include Anees Ahmed, Kris Baleva, Mychelle Balthazard, Andrew Cayley, Hans Corell,
Rowan Downing, Clair Duffy, Diana Ellis, Craig Etcheson, Elisabeth Simonneau Fort, Peter Foster, Anta Guissé, Steve Heder, Huy Vannak, Andrew Ianuzzi, Larry Johnson, Michael G. Karnavas, Karim Khan, Marcel Lemonde, Agnieszka Klonowiecka-Milart, Zach Lampell, Panhavuth Long, Jasper Pauw, Michiel Pestman, Caitlin Rieger, Richard Rogers, Nushin Sarkarati, David Scheffer, Rupert Skilbeck, William Smith, Christoph Sperfeldt, Jeanne Sulzer, David Tolbert, Clint Williamson, and You Bunleng. Sometimes their assistance took the form of an interview, and on other occasions they helped us by responding to specific questions or providing us with useful background information. We also thank a number of current and former Cambodian officials at the ECCC who completed confidential questionnaires or otherwise helped us to understand the workings of the Court.

This research project has grown out of our work with the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), an independent organization dedicated to memory and justice in Cambodia. We have both had the privilege of serving as legal advisors to DC-Cam for a number of years, and our dedicated colleagues at the Center have been sources of both inspiration and expertise. Executive Director Youk Chhang, Chy Terith, Dy Kamboly, Kok-Thuoy Eng, Samphors Huy, Kim Sovanndany, Sokvisal Kimsroy, Ly Sok-kheang, Ros Sampeou, Savina Sirik, Dara P. Vanthan, and many others have helped advance our research by sharing their knowledge of the ECCC and Cambodia’s broader efforts to account for the past. Much of our knowledge also comes from years working with our fellow international advisors to DC-Cam—including Randle DeFalco, Alex Hinton, Jaya Ramji-Nogales, Ron Slye, Sarah Thomas, and Beth Van Schaack.

We are indebted to a number of talented researchers who helped inform our analysis on specific aspects of international criminal law and the workings of hybrid and international criminal tribunals. Many have been legal associates at DC-Cam, including Kimberly Ang, Tessa Bialek, Adam Coady, Chad Spencer Cryder, Andy Diamond, Joanna Geneve, Charles Jackson, Lise Reuss Muff, Anna Mumford, Elizabeth Nielsen, Richard Kilpatrick, Tatiana Sainati, Della Sentilles, Valerie Stranieri, and Charline Yim. Ben Goldman also assisted us, and a pair of University of Michigan students—David Sukenik and George Tam—helped us examine features of other hybrid courts as part of the university’s Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.

We are grateful to Martha Minow and Austin Sarat, the editors of the series “Law, Meaning, and Violence” in which this book appears, and our anonymous
reviewers for their support of the project and the useful feedback they provided. We also thank Melody Herr, Susan Cronin, Kevin Rennells, and others at the University of Michigan Press for their careful and timely work in bringing this book to fruition.

Last but certainly not least, we thank our spouses, who have provided love and encouragement even during the many odd hours when we huddled over our respective copies of an evolving manuscript. We dedicate this book to them.