

# The Phnom Penh Post

## **KR tribunal officials deny graft claims exist, despite judges' concern**

**Georgia Wilkins**

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A spokesperson from the Cambodian side of the Khmer Rouge tribunal on Tuesday dismissed corruption allegations that were described a day earlier as a "major" issue by court judges.

Describing them as unsubstantiated "rumours", spokeswoman Helen Jarvis, who was recently appointed as one of the court's ethics monitors, said: "No specific complaints have ever been made."

The tribunal has been rocked by the re-emergence of allegations that staff on the Cambodian side of the UN-backed court were forced to kick back a significant portion of their salaries to their bosses.

The UN Office of Internal Oversight Services in New York has been reviewing multiple formal complaints of graft since the beginning of August.

Addressing the fourth plenary session of judges Monday, Trial Chamber Judge Silvia Cartwright urged "all efforts to ensure that the [graft] allegations are dealt with ... and independent measures are put in place."

In the wake of the allegations, hundreds of thousands of dollars in funds were frozen by the UN Development Program.

UN public affairs officer Peter Foster said Tuesday he did not know at what stage the UN probe was at, saying "I have heard no information at all" and that the results of the review would be sent straight to the Cambodian government once completed.

### **Praise for Tolbert**

Also on the first day of the weeklong plenary session, judges commended the work of UN financial expert David Tolbert, who was brought in when the scandal-plagued court had to justify a tripling of its original budget to donors.

"Without [Tolbert's] support ... the ECCC would by now be very weak indeed," said Cartwright, a New Zealander.

Tolbert, who will leave later this week, was to meet with Deputy Prime Minister Sok An Tuesday to discuss financial issues related to the court, but the details of the meeting have not been made public.

"The meeting [with Sok An] was private," Jarvis said.

Tolbert has been trying to help ease donor concerns about financial management and pave the way to further funding for the genocide tribunal, which faces a US\$40 million shortfall.

Amid ongoing financial and administrative hurdles, the plenary session is expected limit its discussion to internal issues, including scope of appeals and legal representation of civil parties.