

# The Phnom Penh Post

## **Graft claims not focus of UN, govt talks on KRouge court** **Cheang Sokho and Georgia Wilkins** **December 11, 2008**

*Both sides agree to fight against corruption at the tribunal, but participants disclose little of what was discussed at the meeting*

Talks between a United Nations legal delegation and the government on the Khmer Rouge tribunal ended Wednesday with both sides agreeing to strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms, officials said, adding, however, that highly-publicised claims of graft at the court did not dominate the agenda.

"We did not concentrate on corruption allegations," Pen Ngoeun, co-spokesperson for the Council of Ministers, said following the meeting.

He said that there was little disagreement between the two sides, despite the government openly criticising the UN's handling of a review into corruption allegations in September in an ongoing dispute over whose mandate it was to monitor ethics at the court.

The findings of the review have yet to be made public.

"We may disagree on words, but we share the same premise," he said.

After abruptly cancelling a press conference scheduled for Wednesday, a joint statement was released emphasising both sides' commitment to strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms at the court.

"[T]he parties agreed on the need to strengthen the ECCC's human resources management, including anti-corruption measures," the statement said, adding that both sides of the hybrid court had also agreed to set up "joint sessions" between related departments to ensure that "the entire administration operates in a transparent, fair and efficient manner".

The statement added that measures would be put in place so that whistleblowers would have "full protection against retaliation".

The joint sessions will report to the government, as well as the tribunal's Steering Committee by January 2009.