



Watchdogs call for further action on troubled tribunal

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December 16, 2008

Civil society groups warn officials at Cambodia's war crimes court that there are still many problems to resolve post-talks

Monitoring groups at the Khmer Rouge tribunal have appealed to the Extraordinary Chambers to take "action", claiming high-level talks between the government and the United Nations last week washed over issues critical to the survival of the hybrid court.

"[A]s members of civil society who are deeply engaged with the larger Cambodian public, we are still concerned about the delays, the allegations of corruption and the continued lack of public information on the progress made by the ECCC," a joint statement by NGOs said Monday.

A meeting between Deputy Prime Minister Sok An and a UN delegation disbanded abruptly Wednesday, with both sides agreeing in a joint statement to strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms. Highly-publicised claims of graft at the court were not raised, however, and a press conference was cancelled at the last minute.

"Lack of transparency and inadequate access to information continue to be a problem," the NGO statement said.

"[T]he Court needs to immediately amplify transparency and reinforce engagement and dialogue with NGOs."

The groups also expressed a need to address "leadership shortfalls that have plagued the court over the years", and criticised the court's ability to provide the public with information.

Problems risk snowballing

Long Panavuth of the legal monitoring group Cambodian Justice Initiative told the Post Monday that the issues raised were now causing problems of their own.

"If the recommendations had been addressed earlier, we would not have the problems we see now at the court, such as the divisions between international and national sides of the court, and allegations of corruption," he said.

He warned that time was now of the essence, as new tribunals gain momentum.
"There are new tribunals coming up in Burundi and Lebanon. If the court does not improve now, it may risk losing donor funding to these tribunals."