

No More Tribunal Aid Soon, Say Canada, Germany

The Cambodia Daily

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Monday, December 12, 2005

Canadian and German Embassy officials said Sunday that their countries do not plan in the near future to make further monetary contributions to the Khmer Rouge tribunal budget.

The statements come days after the tribunal's deputy coordinator, Michelle Lee, said a number of diplomats last week indicated their countries are considering favorable responses to the government's request to help cover its \$10.8 million budget shortfall.

"I don't see Canada contributing additional funding for the tribunal at this time," said Canadian Ambassador Donica Pottie, whose country has so far pledged \$1.64 million.

Pottie said the Canadian government feels it has already contributed a substantial amount to the long-awaited trials.

Theo Kidess, the German Embassy's deputy head of mission, said his government has committed \$2.9 million for the \$56.3 million budget.

"We cannot commit any additional funding," he said, adding that Germany has considered assigning a legal expert to work with the tribunal's administration, but such a posting would not help with the budget.

"We really feel it's the Cambodian government's obligation [to fund its share of the tribunal]," he added.

Lee said at a press conference on Friday that she had made funding appeals to the representatives of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and the U.S.

The Australian embassy refused to comment Sunday and attempts to reach other embassies were unsuccessful.

Under an agreement between the UN and Cambodia, the world body was to pay \$43 million for the tribunal while the government was to cover the

remainder.

Helen Jarvis, adviser to the government's Khmer Rouge Tribunal Taskforce, said the government is still confident other countries will step forward.

"We're still optimistic that the financial situation will be solved in the next couple of weeks," she said.

Commenting on the announcement Friday by Khmer Rouge tribunal Coordinator Sean Visoth that the government will not make public the names of Cambodian judges and prosecutors before appointing them to the tribunal, Jarvis said that the government was within its rights to do so.

Under the UN-Cambodian agreement establishing the tribunal, there is no requirement that the government seek public consultation on who it should appoint as judicial officials, she said.

"[The government] will do what it's agreed to do," Jarvis said, noting that judge appointments in other countries do not require public consultation.

"It will not do anything that is not the international standard," Jarvis added.

Local rights workers had hoped that the government would engage in a public dialogue over the appointments, which many feel is a critical step in ensuring the tribunal is free of political interference.

"We would like the government to take the example of the UN," Licadho President Kek Galabru said, referring to the UN's naming last month of the judicial officials who were being considered for the final shortlist of international participants