



UN Prosecutor: 'Cambodia Genocide Trial Needs Proof'

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In the midst of the genocide tribunal for former members of the Khmer Rouge, a top prosecutor said that proof of direct link is needed in extrajudicial cases.

Back in January, judges for the newly formed Cambodian genocide tribunal had met former members of the Khmer Rouge for the first time. The mandate given to the United Nations-backed Cambodian genocide tribunal only allowed it to try the most senior members of the Khmer Rouge. The lower ranking members could too be prosecuted and sentenced for participation in the bloody atrocities by the Khmer Rouge.

During the regime of the Khmer Rouge, at least two million people have died. Five heads of the Khmer Rouge were detained on war crimes against humanity. It is said that the trial should begin in the middle of 2008. Right now, it is the middle of 2008.

Now, Robert Petit, a top prosecutor for the trials said that it was unjust to prosecute those in extrajudicial killings without being proven to have a direct link. In short, he said that it is harder to prosecute those who ordered the killing than the one who actually did the killing.

Petit is with the United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials (UNAKRT).

“It’s easier to prosecute someone with blood on his hands than the person who ordered, or perhaps more relevant to the context, the person who let it happen,” Petit said.

“You have to prove that the person is specifically responsible in some way. Just holding a general responsible for the action of subordinates if he had no way of knowing is just undermining the system,” he adds.

He addressed at the Vista Marina Hotel in the Philippines. The conference was full of those concerned that were the targets of such atrocities. In short, Petit said that proof was needed. He said that proof was needed that the person knew about such acts and did not move to prevent them from happening.

Petit said that not all murders are equal and not all murderers are equal. In short, he said if the links are not established, it was unjust and unethical to go after the leaders of the Khmer Rouge.