

Resignation of defense section chief not to delay KRT

The Mekong Time

Wednesday, August 06, 2008

The recent resignation of Rupert Skilbeck, the head of the Defense Support Section at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (KRT), will not affect the court's momentum as it heads into its crucial trials phase, said a court official.

Rupert Skilbeck has been offered a job with the legal watchdog NGO the Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI) and tendered his resignation, confirmed Peter Foster, the spokesman for the court's UN side.

Richard Rogers, the current deputy of the section and a former legal officer at war crimes tribunals in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, will now take charge until the court can hire his long-term replacement, added Foster.

"Rupert has been here since the beginning, but his departure will not affect the court's progress, as this is an international hybrid tribunal and we are well prepared to deal with the rotation of staff," Foster said.

OSJI last year alleged that Cambodian employees at the KRT are often required to kickback part of their salaries to senior Cambodian tribunal personnel, leading the court to conduct an independent human resources review which it declared a success.

However, the watchdog renewed calls for a probe in May: "The review did not purport to investigate or draw any conclusions about the existence of alleged salary kickbacks," it said in its monthly report on the trials.

Heather Ryan, OSJI's trial monitor in Cambodia, confirmed that Skilbeck will be working on global issues and not monitoring the KRT in his new role, as this would present a professional conflict.

The trial of Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, is expected to begin in late-September or early October, senior court officials have said.

Former Khmer Rouge Foreign Minister Ieng Sary spent his third day in Phnom Penh's Calmette hospital yesterday after blood was found in his urine, confirmed Foster. "There are no emergencies, he [Ieng Sary] is just being monitored," he said.

[Extracted from the Mekong Times](#)

[Issue No. 127](#)

[Wednesday, August 06, 2008](#)