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KRT moves forward with key amendments

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After a week of discussions at the fourth biannual plenary session of judges, amendments to the Internal Rules of the Khmer Rouge tribunal have been greeted with muted praise by key officials at the UN-backed court, while prompting angered responses from the defence.

"The amendments will help the court to move faster to deliver justice to the victims," court spokesperson Reach Sambath told the Post Sunday.

The amendments, made at last week's meeting, include new provisions on civil-party participation and restrictions on the scope of appeal for the accused.

This sparked a sharp rebuke from the court's defence support section, which claimed defendants at the UN-backed tribunal now have a "more limited right of appeal than at any other trial court in Cambodia", according acting head of defence Richard Rogers.

But the court's investigating judges told the Post Sunday that the main considerations of the amendments were to expedite the judicial process while preserving victim participation.

"The most important amendment is our effort to make the role of civil parties participating in the tribunal [easier] and to facilitate a faster process for the tribunal as a whole," said co-investigating judge You Bun Leng.

Victims advocates, however, say requirements that civil parties might have to file group complaints under a single lawyer limit their voice at the court.

"The rights of victims have been restricted," said Terith Chy, of the Victims Participation Unit at the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam).