



K Rouge Tribunal's UN Funds to Be Exhausted

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Court's UN spokesman Peter Foster said Thursday the UN side funds for the Khmer Rouge trial will be exhausted in October or December, announcing that, "We already know that the existing funds could continue until only the first half year of 2008 and that the money will be exhausted in October or December, based on the scope of our monthly expenses."

Moreover, the UN funds will not continue after the end of 2008, but he expected that the donors will bring more money in time, said Peter Foster.

Peter Foster's statement came amid a preparatory trial of former notorious Tuol Sleng torture prison director Kaing Guek Eav, better known as Duch. His trial is expected to begin soon following critical criticism over the slowly-moving trial process.

Tribunal monitors expressed concerns that funding shortages may affect the start of the first public trial.

The Cambodia's UN-backed tribunal in June proposed more funds to the donors in New York.

Court's Cambodian spokesman Reach Sambath said the UN side needs more approximately US\$40 million for its proceedings until the end of 2009, whilst Cambodian side needs some US\$10 million in which Cambodia has sought half of the needed budget.

The funding shortfall often takes place inside tribunal once none of the suspects have been officially put on trial. Moreover, due to corruption and irregularity, the tribunal does not gain confidence from international community. Especially, the donors are taking consideration of pouring money into the tribunal as it has not dealt with the corruption allegation. This causes the tribunal to face funding shortfall as the UN side's funds will run out at the end of 2008.

Cambodian side, however, announced that its own budgets can continue until the first term of the beginning of 2009.

The tribunal is to rely on a UN special expert David Tolbert, whose term in Cambodia has expired for two weeks. David Tolbert will play a role of fund-raising and lobbying donors to gather resources for the tribunal continuation, Court's spokespersons said.

Cambodian and international judges of the ECCC on Monday opened a 4th plenary session to discuss some procedures of the Khmer Rouge trial. But the meeting failed to get a remarkable result as the tribunal is facing budgetary crisis and the international community has not yet granted more money.

This makes many express concerns that the trial of Duch will not be able to be expectedly held as early as October of 2008.

Khmer Rouge regime is condemned for killing some 1.7 million people during their reign from 17 April 1975 to early January 1979.

Five jailed and trial-awaiting former KR leaders and those most responsible for include Nuon Chea, former president of people representative's assembly; Ieng Sary, former deputy prime minister in charge of foreign affairs; Khieu Samphan, former head of state; Ieng Thirith, former social affairs; and Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, former chief of Tuol Sleng prison. The five lodged appeals against provisional detention, but none of them are released on bail.

Court monitors say both Cambodian and UN sides must address the funding shortfall soon, or it will stall the Khmer Rouge trial process and the Cambodian people who have been waiting for justice for over 30 years will not trust the court.

Unofficial Translation

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