

Bar Association Head Reinstated Amid Conflict

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Citing the need to maintain stability until a new election can be called, the Appeals Court again reinstated Ky Tech as president of the Cambodian Bar Association on Tuesday.

In his verdict, Presiding Judge Samrith Sophal said the decision allows “Ky [Tech] to control the bar to keep its continuity until a new election is made. This verdict comes into effect immediately.”

This was the second time the case was heard before the Appeals Court, which will likely go back to the Supreme Court. Khov Chantha, a lawyer representing president-elect Suon Visal, said he lodged a complaint against the Appeals Court’s decision minutes after the verdict was read because he had already learned what the decision would be.

The two have been vying for the presidency since the incumbent challenged the results of an Oct 16 presidency election and the Appeals Court ruled in his favor in a closed-door hearing Nov 19.

But Suon Visal appealed that decision to the Supreme Court, which ruled June 2 that the Appeals Court decision was invalid and sent it back to the lower court.

Neither one appeared in court Tuesday, but the incumbent welcomed the Appeals Court decision, saying Suon Visal and his supporters could no longer damage the association by opposing his rule.

Ky Tech said the dispute wasn’t over and that he would try to negotiate with Suon Visal to find a solution outside of court.

He would not give a date for a new election. Last week, dozens of association lawyers called on the two men to drop their dispute and hold a new election.

Suon Visal said Tuesday he was not surprised by the most recent Appeals Court decision. He accused the court of flagrantly choosing sides.