

## **KR Trial Will Redeem Judges: Spokesman**

May 6, 2006

By PRAK CHAN THUL

The long-awaited Khmer Rouge tribunal will give Cambodian judges and prosecutors who have previously faced public criticism the chance to rebuild their reputations, tribunal spokesman Reach Sambath said Friday.

His statement came one day after Voice of America published the names of 18 Cambodian court officials it said have been put forward for the trial.

The unconfirmed VOA list includes three officials involved in some of the most contentious rulings in Cambodia's recent history.

"This place is a tribunal where they must act at international standards and they can have the opportunity to rebuild their reputation," Reach Sambath said. "Whatever their past was, they cannot implement it here."

Reach Sambath emphasized that although some Cambodian judges may be biased because they hate the Khmer Rouge, they will not pronounce their judgments alone but in conjunction with international officials. He said he could not confirm VOA's list.

Ney Thol, the Military Court presiding judge who sentenced opposition lawmaker Cheam Channy to seven years in prison in a highly controversial trial in August, is slated to serve in the tribunal's pre-trial chambers, VOA reported. Ney Thol said he has not been notified whether he will participate, but added that he was unfazed by his critics. "Even Clinton is criticized," he said of the former US president "The most important thing is self-confident."

He added that his critics should examine their own behavior before, casting judgment on him.

Suor Socheat, the wife of former Khmer Rouge head of state Khieu Samphan, said by telephone that she was uncertain whether the tribunal could be trusted to bring justice for her husband, who is a likely candidate for prosecution. "Previously he didn't do anything wrong to betray the nation," she said, adding that she was uncertain whether he will attend trial.

Mey Mak, Pochentong Airport chief under the Khmer Rouge and now deputy governor of Pailin municipality, said he opposed the trial, but he said he believes it would be fair. "There is control the UN and the government. "They will decide according to the law," he said.

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