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Vietnam asks for Update on Khmer Rouge Tribunal Progress

Asia-Pacific News

Phnom Penh—Cambodian officials and a visiting high-level delegation from Vietnam have discussed the upcoming trial of former Khmer Rouge leaders, with Vietnam urging speedy progress, a government spokesman said Wednesday.

A delegation of the Viet Nam Sub-committee to the Francophone Parliamentary Assembly (APF) led by Nguyen Ngoc Tran met with Deputy Prime Minister Sok An at the Council of Ministers to discuss a number of matters, including the Extraordinary Chambers to try former Khmer Rouge leaders, for which Sok An has been the minister in charge.

Sok An's spokesman, Sum Mab, told reporters after the meeting that Cambodia had assured the Vietnamese delegates that the tribunal process was on track and that the government viewed it as a vital process, both for victims and survivors of the Khmer Rouge, but also in order for the country as a whole to move on from its dark past.

Mab said Cambodia hoped the joint UN-Cambodian government tribunal, budgeted to cost 56.3 million dollars and take three years to complete its work, would serve as a model for other international courts, a valuable education for Cambodia as it begins to implement judicial reform, and a way of cementing national unity as the country looks to the future.

'We hope it will also ... prevent Cambodia's next generations from perpetrating such crimes,' he said.

Tran, who is also vice chairman of the Vietnamese National Assembly's Committee for External Relations and vice president of the APF, also met opposition Sam Rainsy Party parliamentarian Son Chhay Wednesday to discuss Cambodia's yet to be debated anti-corruption law.

He is also scheduled to pay a courtesy visit to President of the Senate Chea Sim during his three-day stay, which began Tuesday and is scheduled to end Thursday.

A meeting of the APF Asia-Pacific Committee is to be held in Cambodia in March 2007.

Up to 2 million Cambodians died during the Khmer Rouge's brutal 1975 to 1979 Democratic Kampuchea regime. The Khmer Rouge was finally toppled by Vietnamese-backed troops in January 1979.

Deutsche Presse-Agentur