

Progress Being Made in KR Tribunal Hiring

The Cambodia Daily

November 7, 2005

Lee Berthiaume

Continuing preparations for the Khmer Rouge tribunal, the UN is seeking to fill two more Phnom Penh-based positions for the trials, while a government official said the naming of the tribunal's overall coordinator was imminent.

For the past month, the UN had been accepting applications from people interested in serving as the head of the unit that will plan, install, operate and maintain the tribunal's computer and communication systems, according to the UN's Web site. The deadline for applications closed on Saturday.

In addition, applications for the position of procurement officer to secure goods and services for the tribunal are being accepted until Nov 19, the Web site states.

Sean Visoth, secretary of the government's Khmer Rouge tribunal taskforce, said Thursday that the government has been busy preparing for the tribunal behind the scenes and following the UN's lead in searching for suitable staff. "We are doing the same," he said. "We are identifying qualified personnel for the tribunal."

One major announcement, the government's appointment of the tribunal's Cambodian coordinator, the top administrative position, may come soon, Sean Visoth said. "I think there will be an announcement next week," he said, but would neither confirm nor deny speculation that he will be given the post.

The government is also still finalizing its judges and persecutors selection criteria and the procedures and rules that will regulate the tribunal's proceedings, Sean Visoth added.

Youk Chhang, executive director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, said on Sunday that the UN is hiring officials who will participate in a reconnaissance-type mission in December.

The mission, which will be led by the tribunal's UN-appointed deputy coordinator, Michelle Lee, will gather information in advance of setting up a UN tribunal office, he said.

About 80 international staff will eventually be hired for the first year and work with about 200 Cambodian staff, Youk Chhang said. "Both sides [have] legitimate documents and legitimate grounds to prepare for the logistical part of the tribunal," he added.

Alongside Lee, who was appointed deputy coordinator in August, the UN has also accepted applications for the post of tribunal spokesperson and is working on a list of

international judges and prosecutors who will be nominated for tribunal selection by the Supreme Council of Magistracy.

Though the UN has all but secured its \$43 million portion of the budget, Cambodia has said it can only contribute \$1.5 million of its \$13.3 million share in cash.

Sean Visoth said that Cambodia will continue to lobby foreign countries for bilateral contributions to make up the shortfall.

The government received a boost last month when India announced it was contributing \$1 million on Cambodia's behalf, leaving the government still \$10.8 million short.

"That is the most important thing," Sean Visoth said. "It must have full funding to work. We hope more countries will follow India's lead."