

UN Prosecutor Vows to Work Quickly, Justly
Kong Sothnarith
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He has sharp eyes and graying hair, and he says his experiences as a prosecutor for other war crimes have given him a strong commitment to finding the truth.

As the Khmer Rouge tribunal moves closer to a trial of more senior leaders, the UN-backed court's international prosecutor, Andrew Cayley, says he is balancing pressure from the Cambodian people to find justice with the need to properly carry out his duties.

"I'll do all I can with my national colleague to make sure that things run smoothly and efficiently, and also to satisfy the donors that we are doing everything we can to spend their money wisely and prudently," Cayley, who is 64, told VOA Khmer in a recent interview in Phnom Penh. "We have to work efficiently, and we have to work quickly."

Cayley, who served as prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and for the International Criminal Court in cases brought against Sudan, was appointed to the Khmer Rouge tribunal in November 2009.

He has sharp eyes and graying hair, and he says his experiences as a prosecutor for other war crimes have given him a strong commitment to finding the truth. But he said he also understands the needs of the Cambodian people to see justice done.

That has meant traveling to the countryside to meet with victims of the Khmer Rouge and to learn from them the scope of the crimes he is prosecuting.

"Learning from a book is not enough," he said.

In March and April, Cayley met with people in the provinces of Kampong Cham, Preah Sihanouk and Siem Reap.

"I met three or four ladies in one village just outside Sihanoukville, telling me everything they remembered, [and] their families had either died of starvation or been murdered during the period of Khmer Rouge," he said. "And it's still very fresh in their mind. It's like it happened yesterday."

"And obviously, that touches me profoundly and makes me want to do the best job I can," he said.

Cayley, a father of three, holds a Master of Laws degree from University College London. He was a military judge, having graduated the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. At the Khmer Rouge tribunal, he replaced Robert Petit, who resigned in 2009 for personal reasons.

The tribunal's office of the prosecution is now preparing for trials of at least four more leaders of the regime, Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary and Ieng Thirith, who have been charged with genocide along with other atrocity crimes for their leadership of the Khmer Rouge.

Cayley said his daily duties now include working with his Cambodian counterpart, Chea Leang, to sort through filings in the upcoming case in preparation for trial.

In Siem Reap in March, Cayley met with Cambodian teachers who were learning to use the book, "A History of Democratic Kampuchea," in classrooms. At the time, he said he would work at speeding the case toward trial, but he said too the trial must be fair.

Cayley entered the tribunal process after his predecessor filed to indict five more leaders of the regime, a motion that was rejected by Chea Leang on grounds of national security but moved to investigating judges after a decision by the Pre-Trial Chamber of the court.

Prime Minister Hun Sen has warned that further indictments could destabilize the country.

"There many former Khmer Rouge within the government, and the government has to run the country, so I understand that the concern has been expressed," Cayley said. "But I am protected by the law and the rules of the court."

However, he said, "Nobody has interfered with what I'm doing here. Nobody has given me political guidance on what I should or shouldn't do."