

Tribunal Donors Expect to Meet in May

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International donors for the Khmer Rouge tribunal are scheduled to meet in May to decide how much funding each will give to the UN-backed court, officials said this week.

“We hope the countries, the member states of the United Nations who supported the establishment of this court, will also take responsibility to ensure adequate funding,” tribunal spokesman Lars Olsen told VOA Khmer.

Tribunal officials have received initial approval by donors for \$85 million over the next two years, but individual countries have yet to decide how much they will contribute.

The court is currently moving toward its second trial for senior leaders of the regime, on charges of genocide and other atrocity crimes.

The US announced in March it would contribute \$5 million to the UN side of the hybrid court, but other countries are expected to make pledges in the meeting, which is scheduled for late May, a diplomatic official in New York told VOA Khmer by phone.

Meanwhile, the Cambodian side of the court remains in a financial crunch, leading to a shortfall in staff salaries in April.

Court observers say the budget crisis could be an impediment to the upcoming trial and ongoing work of the tribunal.

Long Panhavuth, a monitor for the Cambodia Justice Initiative, said donors must work to ensure there is enough funding for both sides of the court, which work in tandem in the offices of the prosecution and investigating judges, as well as the separate chambers of the court.

“The donors can’t walk away, because the donors established the court,” he said. “If so, that will be an indication that donors don’t have enough willingness to find justice for Cambodia.”