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Khmer Rouge Tribunal Feels Financial Crunch **August 17, 2012**

David Scheffer, the UN-appointed Special Expert for the Khmer Rouge tribunal, met with representatives from several donor countries yesterday in Phnom Penh to discuss the court's latest funding crisis.

The meeting, held at the Japanese Embassy, comes at a crucial juncture for the cash-strapped tribunal. The international budget is scheduled to run out of money at the end of this month, several governments who have pledged funds have yet to make deposits and a hiring freeze remains in effect.

Moreover, Scheffer said in an e-mail, even if pledged funds are paid, they would only sustain the international budget through October, leaving a US\$4 million shortfall for the rest of 2012.

To try and fill the gap, Scheffer has been on an intensive fundraising drive, and was "optimistic we will get through this cash crisis, at least temporarily".

"Several donor states have pledged funds which have not been paid in yet, and until they are paid in, the cash shortage remains very serious," he said.

He expects donor countries such as Norway, which Scheffer said pledged \$1 million to the court on Wednesday, and Australia, which announced a \$1.4 million donation last month, to make good on their offers soon.

Japan has traditionally contributed the most to the tribunal, followed by Australia. Officials from both embassies in Phnom Penh did not respond to requests for comment about their ongoing financial commitment.

Some donor countries, like the United States, which was represented at yesterday's meeting, have tried to keep up with the court's needs.

"In the last three years, the US government has contributed a total of approximately \$11.2 million to the Extraordinary Chambers of the Courts in Cambodia," said US Embassy spokesman Sean McIntosh, adding that the US upped its donation from \$1.2 million in 2010 to \$5 million in 2011 and 2012.

All the same, financial constraints have become routine for the court, according to tribunal spokesman Lars Olsen.

“This is not a new trend, but this year we are even shorter than usual,” he said.

As it gradually expanded to take on all of its functions, the court’s expenditures rose almost 300 per cent since 2007 – to an estimated \$45.7 million, according to court figures – with a large part of that increase coinciding with the global financial crisis.

“We experienced that the global financial crisis makes it more difficult to raise funds, as many countries are forced to cut their public spending,” Olsen said.