



Complainant raises names of more defendants

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A US-Cambodian lawyer who lost family members to the Khmer Rouge says she will file the first civil party suit against regime cadre who are not currently in the custody of the UN-backed tribunal.

Seng Theory's complaint names former Khmer Rouge commanders Meas Muth and Sou Met, in what she said is an effort to move the court forward on cases 003 and 004. The court has so far only prosecuted one case, against torture chief Duch, and it is preparing for a second, against Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary and Ieng Thirith. But the future of cases 003 and 004 remain unclear.

Those two cases, which the international prosecution has pushed forward against some judges at the court and the wishes of senior officials, would widen the scope of the tribunal and could mean more indictments.

"I want to claim full justice," Seng Theory, who is also a complainant in the upcoming case against four jailed leaders, told VOA Khmer Monday. "I am aware that there is political interference in those cases, and I want to encourage other victims to participate in filing complaints for cases 003 and 004, where political leaders have declared the cases would not move."

Government officials have said in the past there is no interference with the court, but Prime Minister Hun Sen and tribunal prosecutor Chea Leang have both said wider indictments have the potential of destabilizing the country.

The court has kept the names of potential defendants in cases 003 and 004 confidential. However, Meas Muth, a former division chief of the regime, and Sou Met, a central committee member, are both among a small group of cadre experts have said could be indicted in further trials.

Seng Theory's potential complaint met with sharp recrimination from the court.

"Any names alleged by Theory Seng or anyone else is pure speculation," tribunal spokesman Lars Olsen told VOA Khmer Monday. "And to start speculating on names of a confidential investigation under the pretext of being a civil party applicant is irresponsible and reckless and is contradictory to judicial due process."

Seng Theory's lawyer, Choung Chou Ngy, said Monday he had not yet filed documents with the court, but Rong Chhorng, head of the Victim's Support Service, confirmed he had received an e-mail from her declaring her intent to file.

Meas Muth, who currently lives in a remote village in Samlot district, Battambang province, has said in the past that deaths under his watch were from "sickness, fever, lightning, drowning," and did not constitute wrongdoing on his part. He has defended his position in the Khmer Rouge as a defender of Cambodia against foreign invasion.

Sou Met could not immediately be reached for comment.