

Former cadres in complaint
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Local activist Theary Seng has announced plans to file the first civil party application in the Khmer Rouge tribunal's controversial third and fourth cases, targeting her complaint at former KR military commanders Meas Muth and Sou Met.

The former executive director of the Centre for Social Development said in a statement Friday that Meas Muth and Sou Met – commanders of the Khmer Rouge navy and air force, respectively – were among the five suspects being investigated by the tribunal in Cases 003 and 004. The identities of suspects in these cases remain confidential, however, and Theary Seng acknowledged yesterday that she had not received confirmation from the tribunal the pair are indeed under investigation.

“I’m taking a high risk here because I don’t have official documents before me,” she said, though she added that she was “very confident” that the pair were being investigated.

“The information is really based on public documents, on articles and research, experts and people who have been [working on] these issues,” she said.

United Nations court spokesman Lars Olsen called Theary Seng’s allegations premature and irresponsible.

“The court will not be bullied into confirming or denying speculation about a confidential investigation,” he said.

“This is a reckless act which shows complete disregard for judicial due process and principles of law.”

Meas Muth and Sou Met have long been suggested as suspects for the tribunal, having been named by scholars Stephen Heder and Brian Tittmore in their influential 2001 paper “Seven Candidates for Prosecution: Accountability for the Crimes of the Khmer Rouge”.

Prime Minister Hun Sen and other government officials have expressed opposition to the court’s pending investigations in Cases 003 and 004, calling them a threat to the Kingdom’s stability. Prosecutors have said there will be no further investigations at the tribunal beyond these cases.

In 2007, Theary Seng became the first person to pursue civil party status at the tribunal, applying to participate in Case 002 after having lost both her parents under the Khmer Rouge. She said in her statement that she had targeted Meas Muth and Sou Met in her new application because she considered them responsible for the deaths of her parents “for their roles as military commanders who contributed to the common purpose and design in the arrests and executions specifically in their respective divisions and generally for the whole of Cambodia”.

Uth Sopheak, 26, the son of Meas Muth, said yesterday that he was unconcerned about a possible case against his father.

“I am not worried about him because he did nothing wrong,” Uth Sopheak said. “It is useless for people to keep thinking about revenge.”