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KRT Judge Decision With Ministers

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The Supreme Council of the Magistracy has finalised its decision on the appointment of UN-nominated reserve international judge at the Khmer Rouge tribunal, and has sent that decision to the Council of Ministers, the justice minister said yesterday.

“This issue [a decision on the appointment of the reserve co-investigating judge], I sent to the Council of Ministers yesterday, and we wait for the council now,” Minister of Justice Ang Vongvathana told the Post yesterday.

Speaking to a reporter as he was stepping into his car at Le Royal Hotel, Ang Vongvathana, who is a member of the SCM, would not comment further.

When contacted yesterday, Council of Ministers’ spokesman Phay Siphon said he had not heard word of the SCM’s decision and the head of the CoM’s legal department had not received any correspondence. Phay Siphon directed enquires to the office of Deputy Prime Minister Sok An, who heads up the Khmer Rouge tribunal committee in the government.

Advisors for Sok An, Kim Raviseth and Chea Vandeth, could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Tribunal co-prosecutor Chea Leang, who also serves as Cambodia’s Supreme Court general prosecutor, confirmed to the Post that the SCM has reached a decision on the appointment of the reserve co-investigating judge.

“The meeting was held secretly and we have already made the decision,” she said. “I cannot comment on the decision, but there will be a public statement issued on this case.”

The government has been adamant that it has no role in the actions of the SCM, which is charged with proffering official endorsement upon the UN-nominated Laurent Kasper-Ansermet.

“The government maintains that the Supreme Council of Magistracy is an independent body, so why are they [the SCM] sending their decision to the Council of Ministers?” Human Rights Watch’s Phil Robertson said yesterday by telephone.

“Why are they not simply notifying about the decision?”