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KR lawyers renew call for inquiry **James O'Toole** **September 3, 2010**

Lawyers for former Khmer Rouge Brother Number Two Nuon Chea have appealed a decision by judges at Cambodia's war crimes tribunal not to investigate allegations of political interference by government officials.

In a filing dated Wednesday, the lawyers said a decision from the court's Office of the Co-Investigating Judges last month to reject their request was part of a pattern of placing "considerations of expediency above fair trial requirements".

"The defence cannot help but feel that the OCIJ is afraid of somehow embarrassing the Cambodian authorities" with an investigation, the filing said.

In outlining their concerns about government interference, the lawyers pointed to statements by Prime Minister Hun Sen and others that six senior officials summoned by the court were not obligated to appear. They also suggested that Cambodian Co-Investigating Judge You Bunleng had been pressured into backing out of pending investigations in the court's third and fourth cases that his international colleague, Marcel Lemonde, was conducting on his own.

A report to be released by the Open Society Justice Initiative today praises the court for the completion of its first case last month, but says concerns about political interference should be resolved before the second case goes to trial.

The OSJI also cites the importance of the court's securing donor funding to make up for budgetary shortfalls. Currently, the court's international side is short US\$6.3 million for this year, while the domestic side is short \$3.6 million, the report says.

Court spokesman Reach Sambath said Cambodian judicial and legal officers at the court had not been paid salaries in two months because of budgetary concerns, but were expected to be paid next week.

United Nations court spokesman Lars Olsen said fundraising was a “priority” for Clint Williamson, the UN’s special expert to the secretary general for the tribunal, as he travels to Cambodia this week to meet with officials from the Kingdom and donor countries.