



KRT urged to act on Khmer Krom

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Lawyers representing Khmer Krom civil parties at Cambodia's war crimes tribunal have praised Andrew Cayley, the court's international co-prosecutor, for making a submission in relation to their clients in the tribunal's controversial fourth case.

The lawyers cautioned, however, that Case 004 appeared in danger of being scuttled under pressure from the Cambodian government, and urged the court's investigating judges to follow through on the investigation.

In a statement issued on Thursday, Cayley announced he had filed a "supplementary submission" in Case 004, expanding on the alleged crimes initially submitted to the judges for investigation.

This supplementary submission, Cayley said, included "crimes committed against the Khmer Krom population in Takeo and Pursat provinces, based primarily on civil party applications, complaints and other new evidence".

In their own statement on Friday, a group of lawyers led by Mahdev Mohan of Singapore Management University said Cayley had "lived up to his word" in bringing evidence about their clients' suffering before the court.

They urged co-investigating judges Siegfried Blunk of Germany and You Bunleng of Cambodia to "thoroughly examine the considerable evidence that has been put before them".

"Our clients' evidence bridges a missing link in the evidence that the court currently has and sheds light on why the Pol Pot regime killed Khmers," Mohan said in the statement.

"After all they have endured, the Khmer Krom's evidence should be presented, not swept under the carpet."

"Khmer Krom" is a term for ethnic Khmer with roots in Southern Vietnam. Genocide charges have been brought in the court's upcoming second case in relation to the regime's treatment of Cham Muslims and ethnic Vietnamese, though not the Khmer Krom.

There remains considerable doubt, however, about whether Case 004, involving a trio of mid-level Khmer Rouge cadres, will ever make it to trial.

The Cambodian government has long been against prosecutions beyond Case 002, and in April, the co-investigating judges announced the conclusion of their Case 003 investigation despite not having questioned the suspects involved.

This has fuelled allegations that the judges deliberately botched their investigation as part of a pre-planned dismissal of the case, and that Case 004 may be headed for the same fate.

Staff from the investigating judges' office have begun resigning in protest in recent weeks over the judges' apparent inaction in Case 003.

In a resignation letter last month, noted Khmer Rouge-era historian Stephen Heder, formerly a consultant to the investigating judges, spoke of the "toxic atmosphere" in their office, saying it had become "professionally dysfunctional".

He said the judges had closed Case 003 "effectively without investigating it".