

Khmer Rouge Tribunal Seeks \$92 Million
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The UN-backed tribunal in Cambodia is seeking \$92 million from donor countries to cover operational costs for the next two years.

According to a budget proposal for 2012-2013 submitted to donor group, a copy of which was obtained by VOA Khmer, the Cambodian side of the court needs \$20 million for the two-year period.

“Based on the anticipated needs of the court for the coming two years, the ECCC is requesting approval of the proposed total budget in the amount of \$92 million, of which \$47.5 million is for 2012 and \$44.5 million is for 2013 inclusive of contingency,” the document reads.

Martin Nesirky, a spokesman for the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, told VOA Khmer by phone that donor nations are reviewing the proposal.

A diplomat following the issue told VOA Khmer that representatives for 15 donor countries are scheduled to meet Feb 24 in a meeting to be chaired by Ban Ki-moon.

The Khmer Rouge tribunal’s financial reserves are very low, officials in Cambodia say, and staff from the Cambodian side of the court have not been paid since October.

“If the donors still continue their support, then the court can complete its mission,” said Huy Vannak, a spokesman for the tribunal.

Both the court director Kranh Tony and his deputy Knut Rosandhaug are now in New York for the meeting.

The court’s international side is expected to run out of funds in a few months, if more funding is not allocated.

Cambodia and the UN are at odds over the appointment of the international investigating judge Laurent Kasper-Ansermet. Cambodia says it objects to the appointment because the Swiss judge used Twitter to draw attention to disagreements surrounding potential new cases.

“Our view generally is that donors need to come forward with more sustainable funding for the court overall,” said Clair Duffy, a court monitor from a US-based legal group,

Open Society Justice Initiative. “I think the current crisis of credibility has an impact on donors and whether or not they wish to continue to pledge the money from their countries to this court.”

Some observers say concerns raised so far could be an excuse to keep stalling on the investigations of case 003 and 004.

Prof. John D. Ciorciari of University of Michigan called the budget crisis a game of chicken.

“Donors may demand that the Cambodian government recognize the new Swiss judge before providing additional disbursements,” Ciorciari said. “Yet case 002 gives donors a strong reason to keep the tribunal functioning, and it will be surprising if donors rebuff the Cambodian government entirely in New York this week.”