



'Killing fields' tribunal to be monitored

August 12, 2009

The United Nations and Cambodia said Wednesday they will create an anti-corruption watchdog to oversee the so-called "killing fields" genocide tribunal.

The Cambodian tribunal, called the Extraordinary Chambers, was set up in 2003 to try senior leaders and others allegedly most responsible for serious violations of Cambodian and international law committed during Khmer Rouge rule from 1975 to 1979.

Designating an independent counselor "represents a further step to help strengthen the human resources management in the entire (tribunal) administration, including anti-corruption measures," said a joint statement issued in Phnom Penh by U.N Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs Peter Taksoe-Jensen and Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister Sok An.

The statement went on to say the watchdog would help protect court staff "against any possible retaliation for good faith reporting of wrongdoing. In this context, the independent counselor will be available to all staff to bring forward any concerns confidentially, and will be empowered to address such concerns."

The tribunal is staffed by Cambodian and international employees, prosecutors and judges.

As many as 2 million people may have died in the Southeast Asian nation during the Khmer Rouge rule, which was followed by civil war.

Defendants before the court include former S-21 detention camp commander Kaing Guek Eav, also known as "Duch," who is charged with torture and premeditated murder, and Nuon Chea, who is charged with planning and ordering the murder, torture and enslavement of civilians.