



**KRT appoints co-head civil party lawyer
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December 3, 2010**

The Khmer Rouge tribunal has appointed French lawyer Elisabeth Simonneau Fort to serve as the lead international lawyer for civil parties at the court.

The lead co-lawyers' positions were established in February in response to the high volume of civil parties expected to participate in Case 002. Just 90 civil parties participated for the duration of the court's first case; more than 2,100 have been accepted thus far for Case 002.

Simonneau Fort will work alongside Cambodian lead lawyer Pich Ang, who was appointed in September.

"The Civil Party Lead Co-Lawyers shall ensure the effective organization of Civil Party representation during the trial stage and beyond," the tribunal said in a statement yesterday.

"Their core responsibilities will include representing the interests of the consolidated group of Civil Parties, overall advocacy, strategy and in-court presentation of the interests of the Civil parties."

Civil parties also retain the rights to their own lawyers, with whom the lead lawyers will work in cooperation as they craft their trial strategy.

"The Cambodian and international co-lead lawyers have to work closely to coordinate the work of civil party lawyers so that things go smoothly before the Trial Chamber," Pich Ang said.

Participants complained during Case 001 that much of the civil party testimony was redundant and overly time-consuming, calling for reforms to streamline the process.

Long Panhavuth, a project officer with the Cambodia Justice Initiative, said the court had waited an immoderate amount of time to fill the co-lead lawyer position, but added that "later is better than never".

“Looking at the time frame from now until the initial hearing in [Case 002], even though we’re running out of time, the arrival is good,” he said. “They have a lot, a lot of things to prepare, and they have a lot of work to do.”

United Nations court spokesman Lars Olsen said Simonneau Fort would arrive in the Kingdom in January to begin her work. Court officials say Case 002 is expected to begin in the “first half” of next year.

Simonneau Fort has more than three decades experience as a lawyer, during which she has focused on victim rights in criminal courts. She is a founding member of the organisation “The Lawyer and the Child” (l’Avocat et l’Enfant), and has provided free legal aid to juvenile offenders.