



## **NGOs concerned about KRT**

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More than 30 local NGOs have joined to criticise the Khmer Rouge tribunal's handling of its controversial third and fourth cases, expressing concern that "the impartiality, integrity, and the independence of ECCC judges are being tainted".

Developments over the past few weeks at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, as the tribunal is formerly known, have sparked accusations from some observers that the court's investigating judges are planning to scuttle the third and fourth cases due to pressure from the Cambodian government.

While the Case 004 investigation is still open, the investigating judges announced the closure of their Case 003 investigation last month.

In response, British co-prosecutor Andrew Cayley issued a statement last week saying that the allegations in Case 003 "have not been fully investigated" and calling for a series of additional – and seemingly basic – investigative steps including examinations of mass grave sites and the questioning of the suspects in the case. The Case 003 suspects are identified in court documents as former KR navy commander Meas Muth and air force commander Sou Met, though the court has not yet officially made their names public.

Yesterday, 32 civil society groups including Legal Aid of Cambodia, Adhoc and the Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee issued a statement urging the court and the international community to ensure that judicial independence is maintained.

"We urge all concerned individuals and groups to take appropriate action to ensure that the Case 003 and 004 investigations are full and genuine," the groups said, adding that the court "must safeguard against any creation of negationist or revisionist records about what happened" under the Khmer Rouge.

United Nations court spokesman Lars Olsen said yesterday that the tribunal did not need outside input in its judicial decision-making.

"The court will continue to do its job independently according to the legal framework for the ECCC," he said. "That means also independent of civil society."