

Cambodia OKs New Khmer Rouge Court Judges Chhay Channyda and Bridget Di Certo June 28, 2012

Cambodia has approved the appointment of two new UN-nominated judges to fill posts at the Khmer Rouge tribunal's much-maligned Office of the Co-Investigating Judges, news agency Voice of America reported on Tuesday.

According to VOA, the new international co-investigating judge is Mark Harmon, a former prosecutor who worked with current tribunal prosecutor Andrew Cayley at the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

The new reserve judge is Caroline Charpentier, a French national who has worked on rule of law and judicial cooperation projects in Kosovo, VOA reported.

Charpentier will be the fifth female at the 23-judge court and only the second French national to be appointed, despite the tribunal being heavily based on a French legal framework.

Sam Prachea Manith, director of the Ministry of Justice cabinet, could not be reached yesterday to confirm the meeting of the Supreme Council of Magistracy and endorsement of the two nominees, but Cambodian co-investigating judge You Bunleng, who sits on the SCM, confirmed there was a meeting.

"The two judges, I welcome them and am waiting to work with them," he said.

Tribunal prosecutor Chea Leang, who also sits on the judicial council, could not be reached for comment.

Legal affairs spokesman Lars Olsen said the tribunal had received no information from the council about appointments.

Earlier this year, the council refused to endorse the UN-appointment of international reserve co-investigating judge Laurent Kasper-Ansermet, sparking a division between UN and Cambodian staff and roiling investigations into government-opposed cases 003 and 004.

The council took particular exception to Kasper-Ansermet's Twitter account, in which he expressed a desire to investigate cases 003 and 004 and shared tribunal-related media articles.

Neither of the appointees appear to have an active social media presence, but Harmon told British newspaper *The Guardian* in 2011 that "the only way to attempt to eradicate this stain and to deliver justice to the victims of this tragedy is to expose the individual criminal responsibility of those persons who perpetrated and assisted in the commission of these heinous crimes".