



## **War of Words Escalates at Khmer Rouge Tribunal** **February 10, 2012**

A public war of words between two judges at the Khmer Rouge tribunal intensified Friday as a Cambodian jurist fired back at his international counterpart.

You Bunleng, co-investigating judge at the UN-backed war crimes court, issued a statement accusing Laurent Kasper-Ansermet of having 'ill intentions' and showing 'obstinacy and disrespect' for the court's rules.

Kasper-Ansermet issued a statement of his own Thursday that said You Bunleng had opposed 'proposed investigative acts' in the court's upcoming cases. Senior Cambodian officials have repeatedly said the tribunal's third and fourth cases would not be allowed to reach trial. 'The issuance of such a public statement by Mr Ansermet furthers the doubt of the national co-investigating judge regarding Mr Ansermet's professionalism - is he a judge or a press officer?' You Bunleng asked.

The Cambodian judge added that he had never discussed any 'procedural acts' with Kasper-Ansermet, whose authority at the court is disputed.

You Bunleng does not recognize Kasper-Ansermet as the court's international co-investigating judge and on Friday called the position 'vacant.'

In January, Cambodia's judiciary decided not to approve UN-nominated Kasper-Ansermet to the position after concerns over his use of Twitter. The United Nations said it believes the decision breached a 2003 agreement on Khmer Rouge prosecutions and has said Kasper-Ansermet can carry out investigations regardless.

The pair previously exchanged tit-for-tat statements in January.