



Radio Australia News

Provided by the ABC Asia Pacific News Centre

**Cambodia's Khmer Rouge trial declines to investigate judges  
Robert Carmichael  
December 1, 2009**

Cambodia's war crimes tribunal has dismissed a request to investigate two of its foreign judges, including Australian Rowan Downing, for bias.

The panel of five judges at the joint UN-Cambodian tribunal was forced to investigate an allegation of bias made by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen in September.

Hun Sen said he knew that some foreign judges and prosecutors were taking instruction from their governments.

Under the rules of the court, if the claims were true, such action could be grounds for their dismissal.

Following Hun Sen's comments, lawyers for former Khmer Rouge foreign minister Ieng Sary filed the request last month to investigate Australia's Rowan Downing and the Netherlands' Katinka Lahuis.

In their decision released Tuesday the judges unanimously ruled that the request to investigate their colleagues was inadmissible and unfounded.

The ruling came days after the conclusion of the trial of the first defendant, Comrade Duch, with the prosecution asking he be sentenced to 40 years jail.

The verdict in the case of Duch, who ran the Khmer Rouge's main prison called S-21, will be announced early next year.