



## **Cambodian genocide trial clash**

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A prosecutor at the genocide tribunal in Cambodia has formally recommended that a further five suspects be investigated for crimes against humanity – setting the UN-backed trial on a collision course with the country's Prime Minister.

The tribunal, held on the outskirts of the capital, Phnom Penh, is trying five members of the Khmer Rouge for their alleged role in the mass murder that led to the deaths of up to 1.7 million people. Among them is Kaing Guek Eav, also known as Duch, the head of a notorious prison where thousands were sent to be tortured before being dispatched for execution at the "killing fields".

A statement issued yesterday by the acting international prosecutor, William Smith, said he had recommended to the trial judges that a further five, so-far unidentified, suspects be investigated. He said the cases involved at least 32 instances of murder, torture, unlawful detention, forced labour and persecution.

The announcement came after Prime Minister Hun Sen said on Monday that such a move would lead to widespread violence. "I would like to tell you that if you prosecute [more leaders] without thinking beforehand about national reconciliation and peace, and if war breaks out again and kills 20,000 or 30,000 people, who will be responsible?" he said.

The UN, which is overseeing the prosecutions, reiterated that the tribunal is independent of the government. The tribunal has both an international and a Cambodian prosecutor and the two have always disagreed on whether more suspects should be tried. Hun Sen, himself a former Khmer Rouge officer, has been accused of interfering with the trial and trying to protect many former rebels, some of whom are now members of his government.