



## **Former premier faults tribunal as ‘very slow’**

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Cambodia’s former prime minister, Pen Sovann, says the current number of Khmer Rouge leaders now on trial at a UN-backed court is not enough, and that more urgency should be brought to cases already underway at the tribunal.

“Today it is my view that there has been no justice found for the victims who passed away,” Pen Sovann, the first prime minister of the country under the Vietnamese-backed People’s Republic of Kampuchea, in 1981, said.

“The deceased and the survivors are waiting for the government to cooperate with the international court to find fault in the Khmer Rouge leaders and for their brutal crimes, to clearly unveil these to the people and find justice,” he said, speaking as a guest on a supplemental “Hello VOA” program Tuesday. “But I think it’s been very slow.”

“Historically, it’s been 32 years since the Khmer Rouge fell, and those who have to take responsibility have not been pushed as fast as they should have and in accordance to the desires of the people, finding fault with the Khmer Rouge, why they killed their own nation and destroyed their own national religion,” he said.

Pen Sovann said the Khmer Rouge left him with “no choice” but to set up a movement to oppose them in the 1980s, “in order to rescue the nation from living in blood and tears.”

He said local people have evidence and can act as witnesses at the court, but its work has not been conducted independently. He cited the opposition to some of the court’s work by Prime Minister Hun Sen as an example.

“I think the trials are right in seeking justice,” he said. “But it’s not possible because the government leaders intervene and don’t want a trial.”

Pen Sovann said he “completely” agreed with the trials of five unnamed suspects in two more cases at the tribunal.

Historian Ros Chantrabot told VOA Khmer the Khmer Rouge had formed in the turmoil of the times, amidst war and corruption, through the support of Vietnam and China. But what caused the mass atrocities and deaths was confusion in policy, and pride, he said.

“That’s why we saw the Khmer Rouge forget the spirit of the nation, the national culture,” he said.