



KRT urged to address admissibility of civil party claims

James O'Toole

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THE BELATED release of information on the scope of the investigation in the Khmer Rouge tribunal's second case has caused discontent among civil party applicants uncertain about the admissibility of their claims, the Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC) said in a statement released Monday, ahead of today's opening of the court's seventh plenary session.

"Late and insufficient information about the court's scope of investigation and related admissibility policies will likely lead in the coming months to a large number of civil parties not being admitted to participate in Case 002," CHRAC said, arguing that victim participation must be at the forefront of the concerns of the plenary.

The court announced the scope of investigation in its second case – the crime sites and situations being investigated for evidence of charges laid thus far – in November. Victims of the Khmer Rouge who suffered as a result of crimes committed at sites outside the scope of the investigation cannot be admitted as civil parties, though anyone is eligible to submit complaints and information to the court's Victims' Unit.

UN court spokesman Lars Olsen said the tribunal had to strike a balance "between maintaining the confidentiality of the investigation and informing potential victims of their rights to participate as civil parties".

CHRAC lauded the court for its expansion of the responsibilities of the Victims' Unit, though the group also registered concern about the proposed appointment of lead co-lawyers who would speak in court on behalf of all civil parties, warning the court not to limit the role of civil parties "beyond what is necessary to ensure efficiency at trial".

Decisions on the admissibility of civil party applications will be announced in September at the latest, provided the court stays on schedule, Olsen said.