

New Tribunal Budget Anticipates More Indictments

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October 30, 2009

Khmer Rouge tribunal administrators have completed a budget request for the next two years that anticipates the possibility of further indictments, an official said.

The indictment of more leaders of the regime is politically controversial, with Prime Minister Hun Sen and Cambodian judges contending further charges could endanger national stability.

“The ECCC has finalized the budget proposal for 2010 and 2011, which has taken into account that there might be an additional case three with five suspects,” said Lars Olsen, a spokesman for the UN side of the court. “But since the donors have not had a chance to look into the budget yet, we cannot go public with the figure.”

The proposal has been sent to UN headquarters in New York and will be presented to donors “very soon,” he said.

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, or ECCC, the official name of the tribunal, was originally budgeted at just \$56 million. That figure proved less than enough, and the tribunal has found itself in fiscal trouble on several occasions.

Donors have already approved a \$143 million round of funding that was to last through 2011, but monitors for the UN-backed court say the new figure is larger and would carry the tribunal through 2012.

“Based on the latest developments, we have seen that at present the ECCC is negotiating with key donors,” at least five countries, said Latt Ky, who monitors the tribunal for the rights group Adhoc. The exact figure remains a secret, he said.

A US State Department official said a new budget is being reviewed by Congress. The US has so far provided \$1.8 million for the UN side of the court, following measures by the tribunal to deal with ongoing allegations of corruption.

The names of the five suspects who could face indictment by investigating judges have not been publicly released.

But one who could face charges is Meas Muth, a former Khmer Rouge commander who is now an adviser to the Ministry of Defense. He has said he will go to the court if summoned, but he denied any wrongdoing in Khmer Rouge atrocities.

A second possible suspect, Im Chaem, a Khmer Rouge district chief who is now a deputy commune chief in a former rebel area in Oddar Meanchey province's Anglong Veng district, has said she will not cooperate with a court summons. The court has so far only undertaken one trial, of Tuol Sleng prison chief Kaing Guek Iek, or Duch, and is currently holding four other former leaders: ideologue Nuon Chea, head of state Khieu Samphan, foreign minister Ieng Sary and social affairs minister Ieng Thirith.

The tribunal is preparing a case against the latter four that is expected to commence in 2010.