

# The Phnom Penh Post

## **Prosecution, PM dominate plenary**

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There have been no hearings this week, but there has been plenty of tribunal-related news concerning the prospect of additional prosecutions.

Prime Minister Hun Sen got the ball rolling on Monday when he repeated his claim that any more investigations would lead to civil war, this time saying the casualty count could reach up to 300,000.

As it turned out, William Smith, the acting international co-prosecutor, was that very day submitting formal requests for the investigations of five more suspects. One of the introductory submissions listed crimes that Smith said constituted genocide. This charge was pursued in the prosecution's first introductory submission -- filed in July 2007 -- but was not brought against any of the five leaders currently in custody.

After those filings were disclosed on Tuesday (the names of the actual suspects have not been released), Hun Sen on Wednesday said in a speech in Takeo province that the pursuit of additional suspects would be unsuccessful. If the push for indictments were to go forward, he said, "the result of the trial would be zero". The premier also said: "I would like to appeal to the brotherhood and sisterhood of the former Khmer Rouge to remain calm. There will not be any problems happening."

Though it has largely been overshadowed by the prosecution filings and Hun Sen's comments, the plenary itself could turn out to be quite significant, particularly for civil parties. Trial Chamber Judge Silvia Cartwright said in her opening speech Monday that the Rules and Procedure Committee had convened last week for an "urgent meeting" on civil party participation. "It is well-known that the Trial Chamber has found the process of involving victims as civil parties to be cumbersome, and that it has frequently had the unlooked-for effect of slowing the trial while not providing for the victims' needs, which include achieving timely justice for their suffering," she said. Plenary President Kong Srim said the role of civil parties "could be an ultimate failure" during the court's second case if changes aren't made. UN court spokesman Lars Olsen said the plenary was to devote all of Tuesday to the issue.