



US War Crimes Ambassador wants cases pursued Kong Sothanarith January 17, 2011

US War Crimes Ambassador Steven Rapp met with Khmer Rouge tribunal officials last week and urged both the Cambodian and international sides of the court to cooperate in two controversial cases.

Case Nos. 003 and 004, which would require further indictments and charge Khmer Rouge cadre beyond those already in detention, are sitting at the office of investigating judges, but top court and government officials have said they should not proceed lest they create national instability.

However, in an interview with VOA Khmer, Rapp said he urged official to move the investigations forward.

“We want to make sure that the court is able to conclude its investigation on all matters,” he said in an interview Saturday. “Our view is that [the government] will cooperate fully with the court.”

Public remarks by Prime Minister Hun Sen critical of further indictments have caused critics to claim there is governmental interference with the tribunal process, a claim the government denies.

Rapp, who staid Thursday through Sunday, said his visit had convinced him the investigations will go forward. “The indication I have is that the cooperation is there and ongoing and as it's required,” he said.

Rapp's visit comes after a stopover by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who said proper funding of the tribunal must be a priority. In addition to tribunal staff and the government, he met with diplomats from donor countries.

Rapp will also visit Thailand and Japan before a meeting with donors in New York over funding later this month.

Tribunal spokesman Reach Sambath said Rapp's visit was “an encouragement” for tribunal staff and donors.