



US war crimes envoy seeking support for tribunal
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The US war crimes ambassador, Stephen Rapp, is in Phnom Penh to support the UN-backed tribunal as a hearing for four jailed Khmer Rouge leaders gets under way.

Rapp said Tuesday that the trial of Case 002, for four top leaders of the regime, was “the most important in the world.”

Former Khmer Rouge leaders Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary and Ieng Thirith are facing charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and others for their leadership roles in a regime that oversaw the deaths of up to 1.7 million people. They have all denied the charges against them.

Rapp said their trial has been a high priority for US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

“I believe that at this time it is the most important in the world,” Rapp said. “The crimes still have an effect on everyone in this country.”

Rapp told reporters he is meeting court officials, judges, prosecutors, investigating judges and representatives of victims. He will be working with donors “to make sure this court has resources that it needs to do the job.”

The hybrid tribunal has suffered a series of financial setbacks and has battled repeated accusations of mismanagement and corruption—as well as political interference. The investigating judges are in a public row with the UN prosecutor over their handling of a third case, which they hastily concluded in April to the dismay of victims and legal monitors.

Those issues are out of the limelight this week, however, as Case 002 proceeds.

Bernard Valero, spokesman for France’s foreign ministry, said in the statement this trial, the court’s second, will uncover those responsible for the most egregious crimes enacted by the Khmer Rouge while it was in power.