



KR tribunal appoints lead co-lawyer for civil parties
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The Khmer Rouge tribunal has appointed a lead lawyer who will direct representation for civil parties during the court's second case, as well as a new head of the Victims Support Section, court officials said yesterday.

Tribunal spokesman Reach Sambath said Pich Ang, a civil party lawyer who was previously a lecturer at the Royal University of Law and Economics, has been selected as a lead co-lawyer for civil parties. He will work alongside an international counterpart whom the tribunal is "in the process" of selecting, United Nations court spokesman Lars Olsen said.

Reach Sambath said Pich Ang was held in high regard among his colleagues at the court.

"He is considered one of the young intellectuals," Reach Sambath said.

Court officials say the lead co-lawyers are necessary to streamline participation for the high volume of civil parties expected to be admitted in Case 002. During the court's first case, just 90 civil parties participated to the close of the trial; almost 4,000 have applied to participate in Case 002.

Observers complained during Case 001 that testimony from civil parties was at times repetitive, and that some did not appear to have been vetted properly.

Although civil parties in Case 002 will retain rights to their own attorneys, the lead co-lawyers will hold "ultimate responsibility ... for the overall advocacy, strategy and in-court presentation of the interests of the consolidated group of civil parties during the trial stage and beyond", according to a rule change adopted by the court in February.

The court has also appointed Rong Chhorng, who previously served as acting head of the Victims Support Section, as its permanent chief, Reach Sambath said. Rong Chhorng succeeds Helen Jarvis, who stepped down in June.

“I am proud that the court’s administration is confident in me and has appointed me head of the Victims Support Section, even though I know we will face challenges with all the work we have to do,” Rong Chhorng said.

The VSS is charged with assisting in the processing of complaints and civil party applications and keeping victims informed of the status of their applications. It also directs outreach activities in cooperation with local NGOs.

The court’s co-investigating judges are in the process of making decisions on the admissibility of civil party applicants who have applied to join Case 002, and are expected to have ruled on all applicants by the middle of this month.

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY NETH PHEAKTRA