



UN Legal Official Arrives for More Talks
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A senior legal adviser from the UN arrived in Phnom Penh Monday to hold more talks with Cambodian officials over difficulties at the Khmer Rouge tribunal, officials close to the talks said.

Peter Taksoe-Jensen, who is the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, arrives as the tribunal is reaching a critical point.

Its first trial, for prison chief Duch, is now underway. But the Cambodian side of the court is facing a budget crisis, with donors proving reluctant to fund sub-standard proceedings and with allegations of mismanagement and corruption lingering.

No official announcement was made for the talks, expected between Taksoe-Jensen and Council Minister Sok An, who is the government's point man for the tribunal, but sources close to the tribunal told VOA Khmer the agenda will include corruption, funding shortages, Duch's trial and means for gaining donor confidence.

Taksoe-Jensen has been to Cambodia three times to discuss the tribunal, but funding has remained sparse for the national side. Cambodian tribunal staff only received their March salaries after an infusion of \$200,000 from Japan.

On his last visit, Cambodia and the UN established a parallel system for staff complaints at the court. Some Cambodian staff members have reported to the UN having to pay kickbacks to senior officials in order to keep their jobs at the tribunal—allegations denied by tribunal administrators but that sparked a UN investigation whose results have not been made public.

Such complaints on the Cambodian side will now be handled through Cambodian channels; UN complaints will flow through UN channels.

Taksoe-Jensen's trip also comes amid a brewing confrontation in the courts, over whether to try more senior leaders than the five now being held. Prosecutors are at odds, with Chea Leang, on the Cambodian side, saying more arrests would cost the courts too much and could destabilize the country.

Prime Minister Hun Sen has said more arrests could lead the country on a path to war.

Kek Galabru, who is the president of the rights group Licadho, told VOA Khmer she had been invited to talks late Monday and would ask the UN to keep the funding coming.

“We want to see the five, or more, tried for justice,” she said.