

## Watchdog group calls for kickback probe at ECCC

Written by  
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The most recent human resources review, while promising, was not comprehensive, the group claims; an incomplete investigation "allows a corrosive atmosphere of suspicion to hang about the Cambodian personnel, with no system to dispel or address such concerns."

The kickback allegations surfaced around a year ago along with other charges of personnel mismanagement. In a special audit commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme, reviewers determined that hiring practices at the ECCC were so seriously flawed, "all the recruitments of staff ... should be nullified."

However, the recent independent review -- which was conducted by the Indian branch of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu -- determined that the court had made improvements in its hiring and personnel operations.

Still, neither the UNDP audit or recent review investigated the kickback allegations.

"The terms of reference clearly indicate such an investigation was not within the scope of the Special Review," OSJI's report reads.

To maintain the court's integrity, "a professional investigation, conducted with adequate security and confidentiality controls, should be undertaken to look into allegations concerning salary kickbacks and to identify and implement the most appropriate measures to detect and prevent such practices," according to OSJI.

The group reinforced several proposals it had made in February 2007. Along with allowing for greater transparency in hiring and human resource management -- which the court has, in fact, done -- the tribunal should adopt a fulltime independent financial monitor and create a whistleblower mechanism that would alert international donors to perceived improprieties, OSJI reports.

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Without such practices, relations between Cambodian and international staff could become strained.

"If the court, the government of Cambodia and the United Nations are unwilling to investigate allegations relating to salary kickbacks," OSJI reports, "this system places additional pressure on international officers and staff to report information about possible political interference or other improper practices."



*A press conference was held April 25 to release the Deloitte review's positive findings. Pictured left to right: Rafael Dochao of the European Commission, Tribunal Director of Administration Sean Visoth and UNDP Country Director Jo Scheuer.*