

National judges indignant over corruption lawsuit

Written by

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The day after 50,000 Cambodians turned out to [celebrate the fall of the Khmer Rouge](#) -- and tribunal officials stated they believe the trial of "Comrade Duch"

[will begin in March](#)

-- defense lawyers

[lodged a complaint](#)

with Phnom Penh's Municipal Court, demanding investigation into corruption at the ECCC.

In their complaint, lawyers for Nuon Chea targeted tribunal administrative head Sean Visoth and former chief of personnel Keo Thyvuth.

"The lawyers say that shortly after the government received the results of a United Nations probe into the graft allegations, Keo Thyvuth was transferred and Sean Visoth went on leave 'until further notice,'" according to an article in today's *Post*. The results of the probe have never been made public.

In a response to the suit, national judges vehemently denied allegations of corruption: "There is no reason for judges to cut their salaries to pay kickbacks to government officials, as alleged. We absolutely reject such an accusation."

And they decried the media's involvement in the dispute.

"The above-mentioned action was leaked to the public media, causing confusion and seriously affecting the honour and dignity of all individual judges and this institution as a whole," they wrote.

But many court watchers would argue that the lack of disclosure itself at the ECCC is more damaging to the tribunal's reputation. Since the [UN handed its review of corruption](#) over to the Cambodian government, organizations monitoring the tribunal have demanded that it be made public -- to no avail.

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Unfortunately, Cambodian officials seem to be underestimating the power of transparency. As numerous politicians have shown, if you own up to your mistakes, people may be surprisingly forgiving. But if you act like you have something to hide, people will assume you do.