

## Aborted corruption investigation raises concerns

Written by

Wednesday, 11 February 2009 01:44

---

As you may have read in Monday's *Post*, the Phnom Penh Municipal Court has [suspended a probe into corruption](#) at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. This was a sudden reversal. Lawyers for defendant Nuon Chea -- who had filed the complaint -- had been informed shortly beforehand that the court would investigate the matter thoroughly.

"I would question [the municipal] court's motivations, considering that an investigation was abruptly terminated without a proper explanation," one of Nuon's lawyers told the *Post*.

This is hardly surprising, given that Cambodian courts are often accused of being corrupt and politically compromised. In fact, a recurring theme of negotiations surrounding the ECCC's creation involved the extent to which the tribunal should be insulated from the national court system. Representatives from the UN pushed for as much distance as possible.

Still, the court's sudden dismissal of the complaint -- apparently without proper explanation -- is worrisome. Thus far, the Cambodian government has been reluctant to adequately address the corruption allegations or make information about them public. The Phnom Penh Court's decision appears to be in keeping with the same mindset.

It's not an approach that will win the confidence of donors, or the Cambodian people.