

Judge calls for a "corruption-free" court as plenary opens

Written by

Tuesday, 03 March 2009 03:00



The ECCC's fifth [plenary session](#) opened Monday, with Judge Silvia Cartwright declaring that international judges "will not allow corruption to interfere with the tribunal's delivery of justice for the people of Cambodia."

Current funding shortfalls on the court's Cambodian side will be resolved once international donors are convinced the tribunal is "a corruption-free environment," she continued.

Before Cartwright made her opening remarks, Kong Srim, president of the supreme court chamber, told those gathered that the court [did not have enough money](#) to pay Cambodian staffers' salaries for March. Funding to the court's Cambodian side has stalled amid [allegations of kickbacks](#) at the tribunal.

As [I recently mentioned](#) , I'm not sure what the UN should do at this point to help restore some of the court's credibility. Luckily, scholar John Hall, who has written extensively about the corruption issue in the past, just published [his thoughts in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*](#)

He outlines prerequisites for the ECCC to "regain a semblance of legitimacy before the trials

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officially start this month." First on the list is limiting political interference in the judicial process. Hall writes that political considerations should not figure into a decision regarding whether to [pursue additional prosecutions at the tribunal](#)

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He also blasted the recent UN/Cambodian Government [joint statement](#) on anti-corruption mechanisms at the court, writing that it "reeks of political compromise." Read Hall's commentary in *FEER* to learn more about the steps he believes the ECCC must take to restore its credibility.

In other court news, lawyers for Nuon Chea have [requested ECCC judges](#) interview Prime Minister Hun Sen and King Father Norodom Sihanouk.

** Pictured: Media were allowed to observe the opening of the ECCC's fifth plenary session on Monday. The rest of the session is closed to the public.*