

## Once again, Japan comes to court's rescue

Written by  
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With the court's Cambodian staffers facing the prospect of [no April paychecks](#) , Japan has decided to circumvent the UNDP, [donating \\$4.17-million](#) directly to the ECCC's Cambodian side. This should be enough to fund operations of the court's Cambodian side through 2009.

The donation has extremely significant repercussions. In essence, it takes immediate pressure off of the Cambodian government to come to an agreement with the UN about corruption at the court. UNDP, which administers funds for the court's Cambodian side, has refused to release any money until such an agreement is reached. The funding freeze prompted Japan to donate an urgent \$200,000 to the court last month so the Cambodian side could make payroll.

But since the Cambodian government appears [to be stonewalling the UN](#) on the corruption issue -- Prime Minister Hun Sen has even announced that he wouldn't mind if the tribunal fails -- many of us watching the court have wondered how it can continue to fund operations.

At least in the short term, we seem to have an answer. Donors are apparently willing to bypass the UNDP altogether to keep the court alive -- even if that means looking the other way when it

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comes to ECCC corruption.

[Australia already requested](#) (unsuccessfully) last month that the UNDP release its funding for the court even though there has been no resolution to the corruption issue.

I'm not sure what all this will mean for the tribunal's long-term financial viability. With the infusion of Japanese money, it would seem the UN has even less leverage with the Cambodian government regarding corruption at the court. (At the same time, perhaps the UN never had much leverage to begin with if the Cambodian government doesn't see the court's imminent collapse as a threat.)

And the court's financial needs may be even greater than predicted. [A recent report by court monitors](#) predicted that Comrade Duch's trial will actually last longer than predicted, perhaps into 2010.