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Promotion expected for ECCC official Cheang Sokha June 23, 2009

Deputy prosecutor at the Court of Appeal Chea Leang, who is also at the war crimes court, is expected to be promoted as general prosecutor of the Supreme Court, the top judicial position in the Kingdom, however officials remained tight-lipped about the appointment Monday.

Hanrot Raken, general prosecutor at the Court of Appeal said that Chea Leang, who serves as a co-prosecutor at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), will replace Ouk Vithun as general prosecutor when he retires.

"I have heard this information, but I have not yet received an official letter about an appointment yet," Hanrot Raken said Monday.

According to Hanrot Raken, four members of Supreme Council of Magistracy will come into retirement "very soon" and are expected to be replaced by Chea Leang; Ouk Savuth, currently deputy general prosecutor at the Court of Appeal; Yet Chakrya, chief prosecutor of Phnom Penh Municipal Court; and another official.

"An appointment date has not yet been set," he said.

Chea Leang told the Post Monday that she had not yet received any information about her promotion.

Ouk Vithun also said that he was not aware of any change in his position and that he continued to come into work every day.

Chan Mono, director general of administration at the Ministry of Justice, declined to comment, saying he was too busy to talk to a reporter.

Criticism of role at ECCC

Chea Leang was appointed as the Cambodian co-prosecutor of the ECCC in 2006, a position she maintains. But she has been accused by defence lawyers at the tribunal of being instructed by the government to resist prosecuting more suspects, a move they see as political interference.

"We have not seen the official letter of her appointment, so we would not comment." said ECCC spokesman Reach Sambath.