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Forum Finds Tribunal Angst Over Cooperation, Money

A Khmer Rouge tribunal forum in Mondolkiri province Friday found villagers worried over the ability of Cambodian and UN-appointed judges to cooperate—and whether victims of the brutal regime should received monetary compensation for their pain.

The forum, one of a series held by the Center for Social Development, brought together participants from 12 districts in the province and included a film overview of the Khmer Rouge years.

Participants said they worried about the titles of "co-prosecutor" would lead to the same troubles as "co-prime minister" did in the 1990s, when a power-sharing agreement between the former premiers Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Ranariddh meant deadlocks and, ultimately, a violent coup.

So far, Cambodian and international judges and prosecutors have met numerous stumbling blocks themselves. The most recent public hurdle—excessive fees for foreign lawyers—was overcome recently, when the Cambodian Bar Association lowered its requirements.

Tribunal judges said they hoped to meet at the end of May to reach final agreement on internal rules that govern the operation of the tribunal.

Villagers at the Mondolkiri forum also said they wanted to see reparations for victims, a hope tribunal spokesman Reach Sambath said was not provided for in civil law.

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