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Khmer Rouge Judges in Last-Ditch Bid to Save Tribunals

Khmer Rouge tribunal judges are due to meet on Wednesday in a last-ditch bid to salvage Cambodia's genocide trials.

The week-long discussions will be the third attempt to negotiate internal regulations which govern every aspect of the three-year tribunal and are necessary for the first cases to go forward.

Judges failed last November to adopt the rules and a special committee became deadlocked in January over several key points.

"All the judges are mindful that the upcoming ... meeting is of vital importance," tribunal officials said in a recent statement.

"It must resolve all fundamental differences and agree to a draft text of the internal rules ... the judges are also acutely aware that time is of the essence," the statement added.

If this week's committee talks go well, a full plenary of judges can be convened in April.

Previous failures to approve the rules have already delayed the trials by months, and some tribunal officials say this is the last chance to get efforts underway to bring a group of elderly defendants to court.

Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot died in 1998, and only one former top cadre is in custody, with several others living freely in Cambodia.

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