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Cambodian Leader to Stop Talking About Khmer Rouge Genocide Tribunal

Cambodian leader Hun Sen said Tuesday he will stop discussing the Khmer Rouge genocide tribunal in the wake of suspicions that long delays in convening the trial were caused by government meddling.

"Some people have accused me of commanding (the tribunal) from behind," he told reporters. "Everything related to the Khmer Rouge tribunal, I will not talk about it anymore."

The tribunal was created by a 2003 pact between Cambodia and the United Nations to try those responsible for atrocities during the Khmer Rouge rule of the mid-1970s. About 1.7 million people died during the period.

The trials were expected to begin this year. But a dispute over legal fees proved yet another obstacle preventing the tribunal from moving forward.

Human rights groups have accused the Cambodian government of foot-dragging, which the government has repeatedly dismissed.

Hun Sen's critics have also long speculated that he would not like to see too extensive a list of defendants, which could include former middle-ranking Khmer Rouge members who later became his allies. Hun Sen himself was a junior Khmer Rouge member who defected from the group before it was overthrown in 1979.

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