Ban Ki-moon Expected Later This Month

Sok Khemara, VOA Khmer | Washington, DC

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Ban Ki-moon, right, Secretary General of United Nations meets with Hor Namhong, deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Cambodia, left, at United Nations, September 2010.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is expected to make an official visit at the end of the month, and observers say they hope he will address human rights issues as well as the Khmer Rouge tribunal.

“The impression about this trip is that it is to
focus on the Khmer Rouge tribunal,” said Ou Virak, director of the Cambodian Center for Human Rights.

However, if Ban is traveling with the vice chairman of the UN’s Human Rights Commission, rights abuse could be on the agenda, he said.

The UN may be pushing for more funding at the tribunal, which has struggled financially all year, while it must also push for independence at the court, he said. The court also needs a proper mechanism to fight allegations of corruption, Ou Virak said.

Koy Kuong, a spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said Ban was expected Oct. 26 through Oct. 28, but he did not outline details for meetings.

Earlier this year, Ban made an appeal to donors to fund the UN-backed court, which has tried one former Khmer Rouge, and is preparing a case for four more.

Further indictments have proven difficult, and critics say the government has hampered the work of the court, especially with the refusal of six senior government officials ignoring summonses from the international investigating
judge.

A diplomat in New York said donors are waiting to see a strategy for winding down the court before they commit to more funding.

Seng Theary, founder of the Center for Justice and Reconciliation and a participant in the trials so far, said she hoped Ban's visit would relieve the pressures of funding, as well as political interference, for the court.

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