

NATIONAL

KR Judge Does Not Sign On to New Investigations

BY DOUGLAS GILLISON
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

In a statement to the media late yesterday evening, the Khmer Rouge tribunal said Cambodian Co-Investigating Judge You Bunleng had dissociated himself from a news report that he was participating in the investigation of five new regime-era suspects.

A UN spokesman for the court said on Monday that both Judge Bunleng and French Co-Investigating Judge Marcel Lemonde had signed written instructions to begin the collection of evidence in additional cases against five new Khmer Rouge suspects.

However in a statement sent to the news media, the court's public affairs office said the report of fur-

ther investigations was "non-basis information" and should not be attributed to the Office of the Co-Investigating Judges.

The statement referred questions to the court's two Cambodian spokesmen and omitted mention of the two UN spokespeople.

The investigation of suspects beyond the five currently detained by the Khmer Rouge tribunal has been openly opposed by the government and by other Cambodian judicial officers at the court.

The tribunal's Public Affairs Chief Reach Sambath offered few explanations yesterday evening but said the statement had been sent out late in the evening because it had been the subject of deliberations since yesterday morning.

"We have to get permission from both judges," Mr Sambath said when asked to explain the meaning of the statement.

Asked if this meant that Judge Bunleng did not endorse Monday's release of information concerning the new investigations, Mr Sambath said: "That is why we sent out the release."

Contacted by telephone yesterday evening, UN legal affairs spokesman Lars Olsen, who said on Monday that Judge Bunleng had jointly signed the investigatory instructions, said he was unaware of the statement by his Cambodian colleagues and had not seen it.

"I am not familiar with this media alert, and I have to refer any questions to those who have issued this media alert," he said.