



GENOCIDE WATCH

THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END GENOCIDE

Defense Attempts to Raise Controversial Suspects at Tribunal
By Kong Sotharith, VOA Khmer
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Photo: Sok Khemara, VOA Khmer

Ta An, a former Khmer Rouge commander speaks during an exclusive interview with VOA Khmer on July 27, 2011 at his house in Kamrieng district of Cambodia's northwestern Battambang province. He is among those being investigated by the Khmer Rouge tribunal for the controversial case 004 but has denied overseeing atrocities of the former regime.

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Judges at the Khmer Rouge tribunal cut short questioning by a defense attorney of a witness at the court who sought to mention confidential suspects in another case.

Michiel Pestman, defense for jailed leader Nuon Chea, began a line of questioning about former leaders Ta An and Im Chaem, two suspects the court has kept confidential despite repeated press mentions in Case 004.

Nil Nonn, head judge of the Trial Chamber, stopped him and reminded him to keep his questions limited to the case at hand—No. 002.

Pestman and other defense attorneys have repeatedly tried to prove their clients are not getting a fair trial due to political interference at the court. The political objection to cases 003 and 004 have been an ongoing issue for the court.

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Pestman was questioning former cadre Prak Yut, who confessed to working with Ta An but provided no further information. The international prosecutor has accused Ta An of mass killings in Kampong Cham province and other atrocity crimes, charges he has denied.

In other testimony Monday, Nuon Chea told the court the decision to evacuate the cities had been made to avoid retaliation from the US after the ouster of the Lon Nol regime.

The evacuation of the cities was the beginning of Year Zero for the regime, which sought to remake Cambodia as an agrarian utopia in policies that proved disastrous.

Nuon Chea said Monday Vietnamese forces were an ever present threat in Cambodia and that people had been moved to work camps to “save forces” to work in the agricultural sector.

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