

Three Tribunal Suspects Denied Release Kong Sothnararith April 30, 2010

Khmer Rouge tribunal judges announced Friday they would not release three senior leaders currently in custody, but will hold them until their upcoming atrocity crimes trials.

The Pre-Trial Chamber's decision maintained an order by investigating judges to hold in provisional detention former head of state Khieu Samphan, foreign minister Ieng Sary and social affairs minister Ieng Thirith.

Those three are being held, along with Khmer Rouge ideologue Nuon Chea, on charges of genocide and other atrocity crimes.

All four defendants are approaching the three-year limit on provisional detention, which will elapse in September for Nuon Chea and in November for the other three.

Friday's decision follows separate hearings earlier this year over respective defense appeals against extended detention requests previously filed by investigating judges.

"The Pre-Trial Chamber decided unanimously to maintain the co-investigating judges' order to extend provisional detention," Prak Kim San, chief judge of the Pre-Trial Chamber, said in reading the unanimous decision for Ieng Sary, which was identical to the decisions for Khieu Samphan and Ieng Thirith.

Judges cited the seriousness of the crimes each defendant is charged with, along with risks of destroyed evidence and intimidated witnesses. Judges also said the defendants were a flight risk if released.

Ang Udom, a defense lawyer for Ieng Sary, called the decision "repetitive," claiming judges had not weighed individual cases or circumstances. He has asked that Ieng Sary, who is in failing health, be allowed house arrest or undergo hospital guard until the time of his trial.

This information list was set up by the Open Society Justice Initiative for information exchange about the Khmer Rouge Tribunal and its effects on Cambodian society. For more information, please contact cji@online.com.kh. For more information on the Justice Initiative, please visit: www.justiceinitiative.org

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