



Ruling Party Pushes Against Further Tribunal Indictments

Kong Sothanarith

July 5, 2010

Do not touch others, because they were to respect the order of their respective leaders only.”

The ruling Cambodian People’s Party once again reiterated its position against further indictments at the Khmer Rouge tribunal, with party president Chea Sim saying last week the CPP “totally” disapproves attempts to “use the court for ill-intent purpose.”

Speaking at an anniversary party for the ruling party on June 28, Chea Sim said further indictments now under consideration by investigating judges at the tribunal would “impact peace, stability and national reconciliation.”

Chea Sim’s message was an echo of earlier warnings by Prime Minister Hun Sen, whose comments have been picked up by Cambodian tribunal judges as well.

Cambodian prosecutor Chea Leng opposes the indictment of five more suspects above those already in detention. A decision that was split over national lines in the Pre-Trial Chamber moved the indictments further through the court process, despite the resignations of the CPP.

Observers say the tribunal risks losing its legitimacy if its objectivity is compromised by politics. But that has not stopped six senior ruling party officials—including Chea Sim—from denying summonses submitted by international investigating judge Marcel Lemonde.

Other CPP officials who have refused to appear in the tribunal are Senate President Heng Samrin, Foreign Minister Hor Namhong, Finance Minister Keat Chhon and senators Sim Ka and Ouk Bunchhoeun.

Cheam Yiep, a CPP lawmaker and member of its permanent committee, told VOA Khmer the summonses were potentially harmful to the policies of the country. Chea Sim’s statements, he said, “shows that, do not try others beyond the five leaders under custody. Do not touch others, because they were to respect the order of their respective leaders only.”

Nevertheless, such CPP statements could hurt the upcoming case against senior leaders in custody and would be of concern to the international community and victims, said Thun Saray, president of the rights group Adhoc.

“We wish that this court would operate independently,” he said, “without any interference.”