

DC-Cam Defends Methods

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During a third straight day of questioning at the Khmer Rouge tribunal yesterday, a representative of the Documentation Centre of Cambodia again deflected suggestions by defence teams that the organisation's research was biased against the defendants in Case 002.

Under questioning from Michael Karnavas, co-defence counsel for former Khmer Rouge foreign affairs minister Ieng Sary, DC-Cam deputy director Vanthan Dara Poeu said the organisation did not conduct analysis of the documents it compiled, nor did it keep "files" on the accused.

"As for the authentication of the document[s], we did not conduct any analysis on such document[s]," he said.

The witness later said DC-Cam had conducted some analysis of the documents' "reliability", before clarifying that he meant their "authenticity" was being assessed.

Karnavas later repeated a question posed by the defence for former Khmer Rouge Brother No. 2 Nuon Chea on Tuesday, about whether DC-Cam kept "files" on the accused, which the witness had denied.

When Karnavas presented Vanthan Dara Poeu with a document that included the sub-heading "files: Ieng Sary", Vanthan Dara Poeu said it was a "folder" he had created "for the purpose of research and study" and it had been given to the Defence Support Section.

"Had the Nuon Chea team yesterday asked you whether there were 'folders' dedicated to Nuon Chea, the answer would have been 'yes', but because they said 'file' the answer was 'no'?" Karnavas queried.

The witness said "Such folders exist" and were created "long ago".

Karnavas interjected several times to urge Vanthan Dara Poeu to respond directly to questions. In court on Tuesday, Karnavas had suggested that the witness was being "less than honest".

Kong Sam Onn, co-defence counsel for Khieu Samphan, asked whether DC-Cam had conducted "investigations" concerning crimes committed under Khmer Rouge rule, to which Vanthan Dara Poeu responded that the term "investigation" had never been used

by DC-Cam in its mission.

Prosecutors at the tribunal have rebutted allegations of bias levelled at the organisation by defence teams, who have requested that DC-Cam director Youk Chhang testify regarding documentation provided by the organisation.

Meanwhile, in a statement distributed by DC-Cam yesterday, scholar Peter Maguire – who authored the book *Facing Death in Cambodia* – said the defence had questioned “the validity and origins of interview transcripts” he had donated to DC-Cam, from whom he had “never received payment or direction”.

“I have never pretended to be an objective observer and have always wanted the Khmer Rouge leaders to be held accountable. I held these views long before DC-Cam came into existence,” Maguire said.