

Ieng Sary Defence Grills DC-Cam Rep on Group's Motives

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A defence lawyer for former Khmer Rouge foreign affairs minister Ieng Sary yesterday asserted that a senior representative from the Documentation Centre of Cambodia was being “less than honest” while testifying in Case 002 at the Khmer Rouge tribunal.

Following questioning by a defence lawyer for former Khmer Rouge Brother Number Two Nuon Chea, Michael Karnavas, co-defence counsel for Ieng Sary, requested that DC-Cam deputy director Vanthan Dara Poeu be reminded that he was under oath.

“It is our position ... that the witness is confabulating, is being less than honest, so we would respectfully request that he be informed that he is still under oath and is required to answer the questions truthfully and fully,” he said.

The DC-Cam representative has testified this week about the organisation's approach to researching the Democratic Kampuchea period, which defence teams have challenged in court.

While questioning Vanthan Dara Poeu, Jasper Pauw, co-defence counsel for Nuon Chea, stated repeatedly that the witness had not answered his questions.

Karnavas later repeated certain questions posed by the Nuon Chea defence, including whether representatives from DC-Cam had consulted with prosecutors at the tribunal, to which the witness responded that he had not personally met with prosecutors.

Jasper Pauw earlier questioned Vanthan Dara Poeu about the organisation's “goals and purposes” including whether DC-Cam had ever “stated a desire to have Nuon Chea prosecuted”.

Vanthan Dara Poeu said that he had been called to testify about “documentation” and, after Pauw repeated the question, Trial Chamber President Nil Nonn ruled that the witness was not required to answer it.

Pauw later presented Vanthan Dara Poeu with a copy of a questionnaire used by DC-Cam researchers in fieldwork, and read out “sub-sections” from the document including those labeled with “torture”, “religious persecution”, “genocide” and “crimes against humanity”.

Pauw asked the witness whether he concurred with the Nuon Chea defence's assessment

that, through the questionnaire, the organisation was attempting to provide “building blocks for a later trial”.

“We intend to provide that information and those documents to people who are interested in finding justice for those who lived through the Democratic Kampuchea regime,” Vanthan Dara Poeu said.

The prosecution has argued that simply because one of DC-Cam’s goals is to “search for the truth” of the Democratic Kampuchea period, that does not signify that the organisation is biased.