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KR tribunal: Questions over witness 'deaths'

Bridget Di Certo

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Co-prosecutors at the Khmer Rouge tribunal have requested an investigation into Confirmation of Death certificates for trial witnesses that predate statements given by them to co-investigating judges in Case 002.

A memo from the Trial Chamber's senior legal officer to the Witness/Expert Support Unit chief directed the WESU to conduct inquiries into the date discrepancies and also to determine "whether these witnesses are in fact deceased".

Deputy prosecutor William Smith told the Post the prosecution needed "some clarity on whether the witnesses are dead". The fact that some death certificate dates precede interview dates raises a suspicion the certificates may have been doctored.

Case 002, involving the highest-ranking surviving leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime, relies heavily on witness testimony.

The first witness heard by the court was Long Norin, a close aide of former Minister of Foreign Affairs Ieng Sary into at least the late 1990s.

Long Norin refuted prosecution insinuations that he was reluctant to testify against his former boss, a man he had been close to for 40 years.