



## **No request of Sihanouk summons: Khieu Samphan team November 24, 2011**

Defense lawyers for jailed Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan say they will not file a request to summon Cambodia's former monarch to the UN-backed court, following a hearing in which the defendant asked the court why he was not also questioned.

Speaking in an opening statement to the court on Wednesday, as a major trial for former regime leaders got under way, Khieu Samphan said he was not aware of the mass atrocities taking place throughout the country, despite being the nominal head of the movement.

He also asked why former king Norodom Sihanouk was not summoned to the court, for his role in the leadership of a coalition that helped bring the Khmer Rouge to power.

"I think we will not proceed with this request," one of his Cambodian lawyers, Kong Sam On, said Thursday. That decision rests with the prosecution and investigating judges at the court, he said.

Khieu Samphan was the third man on trial to address the court this week, following statements from Nuon Chea, Pol Pot's lieutenant, and Ieng Sary, the regime's foreign affairs minister. All three are being tried for crimes that include genocide, for their roles as the leaders of a movement that oversaw one of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's worst atrocities.

Norodom Sihanouk was ousted in a US-backed coup in 1970, and from exile formed a partnership with the ascendant Khmer Rouge guerrillas in a bid to return to power. In 2007, court officials denied a request from the former king to meet with him outside the court, but he has never been officially summoned.

In the past, Nuon Chea and Ieng Sary's defense officials have requested he be summoned, to no avail.

"Whether there is a need to summon new witnesses is at the discretion of the judges of the Trial Chamber," tribunal spokesman Neth Preakra said Thursday.

Currently, the case against the three leaders has more than 3,800 civil party applicants and more than 1,000 witnesses.

Its first week was dedicated to the opening statements of the prosecution and rebuttals of the accused. Proceedings will begin again on Dec. 5.

Speaking as a guest on "Hello VOA" on Tuesday, tribunal spokesman Huy Vannak said the opening statement by Nuon Chea had been "great" and full of detail.

Khieu Samphan's statement before the court found less favor. His denials left some in disbelief.

Gregory Stanton, a research professor in genocide studies at George Mason University, in Virginia, called the statement "beyond belief."

"He was the head of state," Stanton said. "How on Earth could he not have known about it?" "He's a liar," Stanton said. "I happened to know, because we've looked at the documentation. He made speeches directly to people, to cadres, calling upon the cadres to exterminate all the enemies of the people. I mean, directly. He made these speeches himself in 1977 and at other times too."

"This is unacceptable, because he ruled the country, and now he has said he did not know the people got killed," said Chap Sem, a 70-year-old farmer from Takeo province, who was attending the trial. "It's not compressible that he didn't know."