

## **Time with Samphan Recalled at Khmer Rouge Court**

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The Khmer Rouge tribunal yesterday introduced a day of testimony on the military structure of the Khmer Rouge, with half a day of reading aloud from the indictment in Case 002.

In preparation for the testimony of Meas Voeun, a 68- year-old rice farmer who, as a younger man, rose to the rank of regimental commander in the Khmer Rouge's army, the court spent nearly three hours reading aloud from the case's closing order – a list of facts compiled during the court's investigation of the accused – touching on passages that were significant militarily and those regarding the defendants themselves.

Even after the long-winded lead-up, however, Voeun's testimony had little to do with the accused.

“Before [1970], I was the bodyguard of the cadres who left Phnom Penh to reside in the countryside,” said Voeun. “Those cadres included Vorn Vet, Brother Soeung and, to my recollection, Mr Khieu Samphan.”

But despite having guarded the defendant and former head of state, Voeun said he “did not know his real position while we were in the forest”.

“In the forest, he didn't do much,” he said, when asked what kind of work Samphan did, later adding he knew nothing of meetings between Samphan and other cadres.

“It was their business, and I was not involved.”

Voeun's testimony focused heavily on commanders Ta Soeung and Ta Mok, the infamous leader of the Southwest Zone who earned the nickname ‘The Butcher’ for his suspected involvement in bloody purges.

According to Voeun, Ta Mok made the decisions for the group of cadres, including Samphan.

“Ta Mok managed everything, from the work as well as the organisation of the forces,” he continued.

Just before the lunch break, co-accused Nuon Chea made a request, through his counsel Andrew Ianuzzi, to make a public comment. The court said it would take the request

“into consideration” and promised to rule on it, but did not re-raise the issue.

After proceedings had concluded, Ianuzzi said Chea had hoped to respond to certain passages in the closing order that had been read aloud, adding that if the court failed to issue a ruling on the comment today, he would raise the issue himself.