

Health Woes Prompt Hearing on Ieng Sary
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Khmer Rouge tribunal judges on Friday will once again turn their attention to the health of co-accused Ieng Sary, a court spokesman said yesterday.

The Trial Chamber will hear reports from medical doctors treating the 86-year-old former Khmer Rouge Minister of Foreign Affairs, said public affairs officer Lars Olsen.

Sary has been hospitalised for two weeks at the Khmer-Soviet Friendship Hospital, and, according to defence lawyer Michael Karnavas, his physical health is in decline.

“I have not noticed any improvement,” he said yesterday. “His ability to concentrate has diminished to about 15 minutes; hardly conducive for assisting in his defence or being present.”

Sary’s wife, ex-minister Ieng Thirith, was released on mental health grounds Sunday after almost five years in detention.

The hearing on Friday should also cover the subject of expert Philip Short’s appearance in October. According to his lawyer, Sary will not waive his right to appear when Short, a journalist who wrote a biography of Pol Pot, appears to give testimony.

“Short, who is declared an expert, is a serious witness who is expected to give evidence against Mr Ieng Sary. It logically follows that Mr Ieng Sary would want to exercise his rights in this and other instances,” he said.

It is unclear how that refusal to waive his right to participate will affect Short’s appearance.

The court has also begun to post on its website batches of declassified documents, mostly dating back to the first landmark case against the chairman of the Phnom Penh prison S-21, Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch.

Among the documents are transcripts of interviews with Duch in which he describes how inmates at S-21 were killed by knifing them in the neck, and the escalating methods of torture deployed to gain confessions, from whipping to waterboarding to electric shocks.