



Sihanouk refuses to testify at Cambodian trials

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Cambodia's former king says he will not testify at the country's Khmer Rouge genocide tribunal after being snubbed by court officials.

Norodom Sihanouk had requested a weekend meeting with officials to explain his conduct during the Khmer Rouge regime, which saw as many as two million people killed.

The 84-year-old former monarch said, on his website Monday, that he had been told that his invitation to a tribunal spokesman had been refused because the spokesman was not authorised to hold such a meeting.

Amid allegations questioning his allegiances at the time, he says he had told the officials that the meeting was the only chance for the court to get his input.

Norodom Sihanouk said last year that he would go before the court, despite his criticism of the tribunal, which he previously branded a "comedy and a hypocrisy."

The former king lost five children and 14 grandchildren during the Khmer Rouge regime, regarded as one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century.

Up to two million people died of starvation and overwork or were executed under the 1975-79 communist regime, which abolished religion, schools and currency, and exiled millions to vast collective farms.