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Cambodia court warns lawyers for KRouge leader

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Cambodia's UN-backed war crimes court on Thursday warned lawyers for the former foreign minister of the Khmer Rouge regime to follow court rules or face possible sanctions for misconduct.

Ieng Sary's defence team, which includes US lawyer Michael Karnavas and Cambodian lawyer Ang Udom, received the warning after they filed three documents on matters already addressed by the tribunal.

Ieng Sary, 84, is one of five top regime figures detained in connection with the Khmer Rouge's bloody rule over Cambodia from 1975 to 1979, when up to two million people died from starvation, overwork or execution.

His team has raised several issues concerning their request to conduct their own investigations, access to the entire trial dossier and their alleged "lack of confidence" in the co-investigating judges and their staff.

But court documents released Thursday said communications from them showed disregard for the rules for the filing of documents, for judicial investigations procedures and warned against "duplicious filings".

It said that breaches of the court's warnings "will result in the application of sanctions against them."

The judges warned Ieng Sary's lawyers that "they are prohibited from submitting duplicious filings or filing made against matters already addressed on appeal..."

They also warned the lawyers that "they are prohibited from conducting their own investigations."

Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot died in 1998. Final arguments in the court's first trial, of former prison chief Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, ended in November and a verdict is expected after April this year.

Besides Ieng Sary and his wife, former social affairs minister Ieng Thirith, the other ex-leaders in jail awaiting trial for genocide are "Brother Number Two" Nuon Chea and former head of state Khieu Samphan.