



## **French judge blasted over alleged KRouge bias**

### **October 11, 2009**

A second lawyer for a former Khmer Rouge leader said Monday he will seek the removal of the French investigating judge at Cambodia's UN-backed war crimes court, adding to allegations of bias.

Sa Sovan, who is defending former Khmer Rouge head of state Khieu Samphan, said he would file a motion later on Monday or Tuesday to seek the removal of judge Marcel Lemonde for bias in the investigation of his client.

The move follows a similar motion filed last week by the defence team for former Khmer Rouge foreign minister Ieng Sary, demanding Lemonde be disqualified from the war crimes court for bias.

"I will file a motion to have such a judge removed because he did not respect the neutrality in the investigation," said Sa Sovan at the tribunal set up to try leaders of the brutal late-1970s regime.

The motions are based on a sworn statement by Lemonde's former chief of intelligence and analysis, alleging the investigating judge told subordinates to favour evidence showing suspects' guilt over evidence of their innocence.

"It is unjust, and I am afraid that this will affect my client," Sa Sovan told AFP, adding that both "black and white" evidence about his client's role in the regime had to be investigated.

Under the Khmer Rouge court's regulations, investigating judges are required to be impartial while researching allegations made by prosecutors. Defence teams are not permitted to make their own investigations.

Speaking on Lemonde's behalf, court spokesman Lars Olsen told AFP Monday that the judge was "not interested in commenting on the allegations" but would provide "necessary information" about the issue to the court.

Lemonde is currently investigating the court's second case, against Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary and his wife, former minister of social affairs Ieng Thirith, as well as Khmer Rouge ideologue Nuon Chea.

Final arguments in the court's first trial of prison chief Kaing Guek Eav, known by the alias Duch, are scheduled for late next month.

Led by Pol Pot, who died in 1998, the Khmer Rouge emptied Cambodia's cities in a bid to forge a communist utopia between 1975-79, resulting in the deaths of up to two million people from starvation, overwork and torture.