



Heat on KRouge judge upped October 13, 2009

Defense lawyers increased the pressure on the French investigating judge at Cambodia's UN-backed Khmer Rouge court on Tuesday, filing an appeal accusing his office of withholding information.

The move follows motions over the past week seeking to disqualify Marcel Lemonde from the court for alleged bias, filed by defence teams for former Khmer Rouge foreign minister Ieng Sary and former head of state Khieu Samphan.

Now, Ieng Sary's lawyers are arguing in an appeal that the co-investigating judges have refused to answer a May request to reveal how they collect and weigh evidence against leaders of the brutal late 1970s regime. 'This denial effectively obstructs the defence's ability to ensure Mr Ieng Sary receives a fair trial and has negative implications for the transparency of the proceedings,' said the appeal, a copy of which was obtained by AFP.

Tribunal spokesman Lars Olsen said Tuesday that the investigating judges did not consider they had rejected the request from Ieng Sary's lawyers, but had been occupied by a number of other time-consuming defence filings.

'The request by the defence team is currently under consideration by the co-investigating judges. There has been no intention to not answer their request,' Mr Olsen said.

The accusations of bias also facing Mr Lemonde were based on a sworn statement by his former chief of intelligence, alleging the judge told subordinates to favour evidence showing suspects' guilt over evidence of their innocence. Mr Lemonde has refused to publicly comment on the allegations, but indicated he will provide necessary information about the issue to the court.