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Nuon Chea team asks for probe

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LAWYERS for Khmer Rouge Brother No 2 Nuon Chea have called on tribunal judges to investigate what they describe as blatant attempts by the government to block the testimony of six officials who were requested to testify in September.

The filing, dated Monday, cites an interview in which spokesman Khieu Kanharith said the government had decided that the officials should not appear at the court. It also refers to a speech in which Hun Sen said he had personally rejected a request for “some people to testify”. UN court spokesman Lars Olsen said Sunday that none of the six officials had responded to the requests.

Nuon Chea’s international co-lawyer Michiel Pestman said the statements were “a very serious problem”.

“It looks like the government, and Hun Sen in particular, are interfering with the administration of justice by coercing witnesses, and that is a crime,” he said by phone from Amsterdam.

Olsen said he could not comment on “investigative steps”. Khieu Kanharith could not be reached Monday, and Council of Ministers spokesman Phay Siphon declined to comment on the filing, saying he had not seen it.