

Tribunal Undecided on Use of New Film

Sok Khemara

February 1, 2010

Khmer Rouge tribunal officials have not decided whether they will use testimony given by a senior regime leader to a journalist and producer of an award-winning documentary film.

In “Enemies of the People,” which last week won the Sundance Film Festival’s Special Jury Prize, Khmer Rouge ideologue Nuon Chea explains his involvement in the regime, elaborating on the alleged atrocities that have since put him under detention at the tribunal facing charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Nuon Chea, now 83, gave a series of interviews over a period of years to journalist Thet Sambath before he was arrested in September 2007 and held by the tribunal. In the film, Nuon Chea admits he and Pol Pot decided they would kill anyone deemed an “enemy of the people,” that is the Khmer Rouge regime.

“If we kept them [alive], the nation would be dead,” he says in the film. Nuon Chea is now awaiting trial for alleged crimes he committed as Pol Pot’s deputy, in conjunction with four other jailed regime cadre.

Lars Olsen, a spokesman for the tribunal, said the court would not disclose steps it may take in an investigation, including whether the film could be used as evidence. However, Thet Sambath and co-producer Rob Lemkin said they had received a request from the UN-backed court for a copy of the film.

Son Arun, a defense lawyer for Nuon Chea, said he was aware of the film but had not seen it.

“It’s not a concern that [the film] would create additional charges against my client,” he said.