



## **Court says Khmer Rouge leaders fit to stand trial**

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Cambodia's UN-backed war crimes court has denied requests for tests on two former Khmer Rouge leaders to examine if they were fit for trial, according to court documents obtained by AFP Thursday.

Lawyers for Nuon Chea and Ieng Sary asked for medical experts to determine whether the men were mentally competent to face trial on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Nuon Chea, the former Khmer Rouge ideologue, complained his brain was "not normal" and his "thinking is generally unclear," while former foreign minister Ieng Sary was in "a state of weak physical and mental capacity," according to documents requesting the tests.

However judges denied the appeals this week, saying there was no evidence the two men, both over 80 years old, were unfit to stand trial.

They are among five former Khmer Rouge leaders due to be tried for crimes committed under the murderous 1975-79 regime, which oversaw one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century.

Up to two million people died of starvation and overwork, or were executed by the regime, as it dismantled modern Cambodian society in an effort to forge a Communist utopia.

Cities were emptied and their populations exiled to vast collective farms, while schools were closed, religion banned and the educated classes targeted for extermination.