

Ex-KR Say Judges From CPP Would Be Biased

The Cambodia Daily

May 23, 2006

Thet Sambath

In a rare and unusual meeting of minds, several ex-Khmer Rouge officials joined local and international human rights groups in questioning the selection of judges and prosecutors for the long-awaited tribunal that will prosecute their former leaders.

Man Nim, a former Khmer Rouge military division commander who took orders directly from Pol Pot, said that courtroom appointees with political leanings could not judge impartially.

"I support having a trial," said Man Nim, who claimed he moves from province to province staying with his supporters.

"But this trial must be done fairly and judges and prosecutors must not be from political parties," he said. If the judges are members of Prime Minister Hun Sen's ruling CPP, as legal analyst Lao Mong Hay claimed last week, they would not be impartial as the CPP fought against the Khmer Rouge, he said.

"[The CPP] always accused Pol Pot of being the killer," Man Nim said. He added that the tribunal should also hold to account the foreign countries that supported the warring sides in the Cambodian conflict.

"I want to have a real court and judges in order to find the real killers and countries that were involved in the Cambodian disaster," he said. "It was not only Khmers who killed Khmers."

Loung Sy Uy, a former Koh Kong province Khmer Rouge soldier and current Pailin resident, said the test of the tribunal would be whether current government officials who once served in the Khmer Rouge were also investigated.

"It is not fair for the top Khmer Rouge leaders if they just accuse a few of them," he said. "If they accused former Khmer Rouge leaders who are now top leaders in government, it is a fair trial," he added.

Former Khmer Rouge doctor Chay Ly, also a Pailin resident, said she feared the tribunal would only stoke hatred and a desire for revenge.

"They can't get the truth because Pol Pot has died and living leaders will accuse him of acting alone," she added.

But former Khmer Rouge Brother Number Two Nuon Chea, a likely candidate for prosecution, said he would leave his fate in the hands of the government and the UN.

"I am now 80 years old," he said. "For the trial, let the government and the UN work and make decisions. I have no objection."

Ven Ra, a former Khmer Rouge official and the president of the Sam Rainsy Party in Pailin, said that many in Pailin view the judicial lineup with suspicion.

"All of us in Pailin know that these judges and prosecutors are unable to find justice for the victims and former Khmer Rouge leaders," he said. "They are working for their political party, the CPP."

-End-