

The Phnom Penh Post

Ieng Sary aide testifies at KRT

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December 9, 2011

Midway through the second morning of testimony from 73-year-old witness Long Norin, Ieng Sary's former aide, the international prosecutor at the Khmer Rouge tribunal abruptly stopped questioning.

"Are you reluctant to give testimony?" international prosecutor Dale Lysak asked Long Norin yesterday via video link to the former Khmer Rouge cadre's home in Banteay Meanchey.

During yesterday's proceedings, it became apparent the testimony of the former Khmer Rouge foreign minister's aide was deviating from what he had told court investigators in 2007.

"You are not reluctant about testifying against your former boss Ieng Sary," Lysak asked. "Someone you have known for 40 years?" Long Norin denied such a close relationship with Ieng Sary. "Since January 7, 1979, I have never had any contact with Ieng Sary," he said.

Long Norin, who worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the Democratic Kampuchea period, testified as a witness to Ieng Sary's alleged criminal acts and the operations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which prosecutors say was called "the antechamber of death".

For almost an entire day yesterday, prosecutors questioned Long Norin about the ministry's power structure ("no one was permitted to make decisions in Ieng Sary's absence"), the fate of returnees who disappeared ("this I do not know"), and the consequence of written "biographies" ("almost everyone implicated in Long Norin's biography was sent to S-21").

Long Norin told the court he did not remember the statement he gave in 2007 and could not remember it being re-read to him on Tuesday.

The prosecution pressed Long Norin on his post-regime relationship with Ieng Sary and tried to ask him about the Democratic National United Movement, formed after 1979. Ieng Sary was president and Long Norin secretary-general.

"Theoretically, the DNUM still exists, but practically it does not," Long Norin said. "There were never any meetings [of DNUM]."

Ieng Sary's international defence counsel protested this line of questioning, which strayed

well beyond the 1975 to 1979 jurisdiction of the court. His objection was sustained.

Documentation Centre of Cambodia director Youk Chhang told the Post that DNUM was formed on September 5, 1996, and both Ieng Sary and Long Norin were listed as taking part in the meeting.

On November 3, 1997, Long Norin travelled to Preah Sihanouk with Ieng Sary, as his aide, and the Second General Assembly of DNUM was held on January 25, 1999, Youk Chhang said.

Kong Duong, a former Khmer Rouge radio commentator, now the Pailin Information Department director, told the Post he had witnessed the DNUM meetings. "I met him after 1980, and I observed that they [Ieng Sary and Long Norin] have a close relationship," he said.