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Hun Sen calls for government response to accusations by Nuon Chea's lawyer

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PHNOM PENH (Cambodia Herald) – Prime Minister Hun Sen has urged government lawyers to respond to charges made by one of the lawyers defending Nuon Chea, the senior Khmer Rouge official who served as deputy to Pol Pot between 1975 and 1979.

On January 10, lawyer Michiel Pestman accused Hun Sen of making statements that "prejudice our client and violate his rights to a fair trial", urging Khmer Rouge tribunal judges to "officially condemn these statements ... and ask the prime minister to refrain from such remarks in the future."

During a visit to Vietnam the previous week, Hun Sen reportedly told Vietnamese media that Nuon Chea was a "killer" who had given "deceitful" testimony to the Khmer Rouge trial which also includes former head of state Khieu Samphan and former foreign minister Ieng Sary.

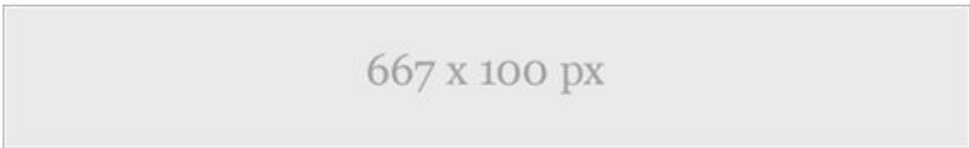
In his first public response to Pestman's remarks, Hun Sen asserted at a flood forum Friday that his comments while visiting Vietnam had no influence over the trial.

"I want to make a public announcement about Brother Number Two Nuon Chea's lawyer who wants to sue me", he said, calling for a response from Cabinet Minister Sok An.

"I was asked in Vietnam about Pol Pot's crimes in the Khmer Rouge regime, but Nuon Chea's lawyer accuses me of interfering in the Khmer Rouge trial.

"My speeches over Pol Pot, Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan and Ieng Sary didn't influence the current court.

"The court can do whatever it wants but I had the right to condemn Khmer Rouge leaders."




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