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Cambodia: Death of senior Khmer Rouge official underlines need to expedite genocide trials

Khmer Rouge Tribunal proceedings must continue without unnecessary delays, Amnesty International said following the death of former Khmer Rouge foreign minister Ieng Sary.

Ieng Sary, 87, was standing trial for alleged crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes carried out during the period of Khmer Rouge rule in Cambodia in the 1970s.

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, known also as the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, announced his death on Thursday morning. The two remaining accused in the case, Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan, are both over 77 years old.

Rupert Abbott, Amnesty International's Researcher on Cambodia, in Phnom Penh, said:

"The news of Ieng Sary's death will be difficult for the victims of the Khmer Rouge crimes who have waited so long for justice.

"But Ieng Sary should not be presumed guilty of the crimes alleged, as the proceedings against him were not completed and there has been no verdict.

"Amnesty International calls for an expeditious trial of the two remaining accused in this case, Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan, with fair trial rights respected.

"The Cambodian government and donor countries should provide the full resources required for the proceedings in this case and others to move forward, so that justice can be served."

ENDS.