Dear Editor,

We thank The Phnom Penh Post for the correction in today’s issue to the misattribution of our letter from last week to Ou Virak, president of the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“Youk Chhang sending mixed signals about tribunal corruption”, September 22).

Further, we write to express our disappointment with Mr Youk Chhang’s letter, written under the title: “Youk Chhang smashes Ieng Sary, defense team” (The Phnom Penh Post, September 23).

When asked about the Ieng Sary defence application to disqualify Judge Nil Nonn on the basis of Judge Nil Nonn’s admissions to have taken bribes, Mr Youk Chhang originally noted – rather dismissively – that the problem of bribery and petty corruption at provincial courts was “publicly known” in Cambodia (“Ieng Sary team seeks ECCC judge’s ouster”, The Phnom Penh Post, September 20).

Our initial reaction on reading Mr Youk Chhang’s remarks was one of dismay; he appears to accept corruption in the Cambodian judiciary as a given. Corruption in the Cambodian judiciary should not be accepted or tolerated.

In his response to our letter, Mr Youk Chhang regrettably not only misses the point, but defensively engages in deflective tactics by attacking the Ieng Sary defence team.

Contrary to Mr Youk Chhang’s assertions, we have neither advocated a delay in the trial nor have we engaged in delay tactics at any stage of the proceedings so that our client dies and we can declare a “victory”. This is an outrageous and offensive attack on the integrity of the members of the Ieng Sary defence.

We filed our application to disqualify Judge Nil Nonn as soon as the Rules of the ECCC allowed us to, so that the matter could be addressed expeditiously at this stage without delaying the proceedings. This is fully spelled out in the application. We trust Mr Youk Chhang appreciates our diligence and obligations to our client and Mr Ieng Sary’s right to be tried fairly before a truly independent, impartial and corrupt-free judiciary.

Ang Udom and Michael Karnavas
Co-lawyers for Mr Ieng Sary

Send letters to: newsroom@phnompenhpost.com or PO Box 146, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The Post reserves the right to edit letters to a shorter length.

The views expressed above are solely the author’s and do not reflect any positions taken by The Phnom Penh Post.