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## **Anger in Cambodia follows Khmer Rouge Sentence**

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PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — For 30 years since the brutal Khmer Rouge regime was driven from power, Cambodians have lived with unresolved trauma, with skulls and bones from some killing fields still lying in the open and with parents hiding the pain of their past from their children.

On Monday, Cambodia took a significant step toward addressing its harsh past with the first conviction of a major Khmer Rouge figure in connection with the deaths of 1.7 million people from 1975 to 1979.

But some survivors were distraught over what they saw as a lenient sentence, one that could allow the defendant — Kaing Guek Eav, 67, the commandant of the central Khmer Rouge prison and torture house — to possibly walk free one day, despite being convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity for overseeing the torture and killing of more than 14,000 people.

A United Nations-backed court sentenced the commandant, known as Duch, to 35 years in prison, a term that was reduced to 19 years because of time already served and in compensation for a period of illegal military detention. His term could be reduced for good behavior.

One of the few survivors of Duch's prison shouted in agitation in the muddy courtyard outside the tribunal building. "I am not satisfied!" cried the survivor, Chum Mey, 79, who had testified in excruciating detail about his 12 days of torture. "We are victims two times, once in the Khmer Rouge time and now once again."

"His prison is comfortable, with air conditioning, food three times a day, fans and everything," he said. "I sat on the floor with filth and excrement all around."

It was the first time in Cambodia's modern history that a senior government official had been made accountable for serious human rights violations and the first time such a trial had been held that met international standards of justice.

The verdict took into account mitigating circumstances, which a court spokesman, Lars Olsen, said included Duch's cooperation, his admission of responsibility and limited expressions of remorse, the coercive environment of the Khmer Rouge period and the possibility of his rehabilitation.

There is no death penalty in Cambodia. Prosecutors had sought a 40-year sentence, but many people had said they would accept nothing less than a life sentence for the man who presided over the Tuol Sleng prison, where people were tortured for confessions and then trucked to killing fields.

"People lost their relatives — their wives, their husbands, their sons and daughters — and they won't be able to spend any time with any of them because they are dead now," said Nina You, 40, who works for a private development agency. "So why should he be able to get out in 19 years and spend time with his grandchildren?"

But Huy Vannak, a television news director, said it was enough simply to have justice in a court, 30 years after the killing stopped. No sentence could measure up to the atrocities Duch committed, he said.

"Even if we chop him up into two million pieces it will not bring our family members back," he said. "We have to move on now."

Others still needed more time. Sopheap Pich, 29, a sculptor, said, "Actually, I'm kind of shaking inside at the moment. I'm not sure how I should feel. I'm not happy, not sad, just kind of numb."

For its symbolism, he said, a life sentence would seem most appropriate. "To come up with a number doesn't seem to make sense," he said. "I'm not sure how you come up with a number."

Mr. Olsen said the prosecution had 30 days to file an appeal. For now, Duch (pronounced DOIK) was returned to the special detention house he shares with four other defendants who are awaiting trial in what is known as Case Two.

In that case, four surviving members of the top Khmer Rouge leadership are accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes. In addition to those tortured to death and executed in killing fields, many people died of starvation, disease or overwork or in the forced evacuation of Phnom Penh in which the entire population of the city was driven out to the countryside.

The defendants include Ieng Sary, 84, who was foreign minister; his wife, Ieng Thirith, 78, who was minister of social welfare; Nuon Chea, 84, the movement's chief ideologue, known as Brother No. 2; and Khieu Samphan, 78, who was head of state. Several other major figures have died, including the Khmer Rouge leader, Pol Pot, who died in 1998.

The judicial investigation in this case is expected to conclude in September with formal indictments, and the trial itself is not expected before some time next year.

Unlike Duch, these defendants have denied guilt, and their lawyers have been active in raising legal challenges.

In their most interesting challenge, they failed in an attempt earlier this year to exclude evidence obtained through torture — in other words, the Tuol Sleng archives of prisoner confessions that contain some of the potentially most damaging testimony about the chain of command.

The four defendants have been in custody since late 2007 and, according to people familiar with the conditions of their detention, some of them hate each other.

In particular, these people say, Mr. Nuon refuses to speak to Duch, who implicated him during his trial. According to testimony in pretrial hearings, Ms. Ieng, who has shouted

angrily during court hearings, has been abusive to her fellow detainees on at least 70 occasions.

For his part, Duch is said to be fascinated by the court's actions and follows reports and analyses closely on television.