



Khmer Rouge sentence challenged August 17, 2010

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, Aug. 17 (UPI) -- A prison sentence handed down in July to a Khmer Rouge prison official is far too lenient for the crimes he committed, prosecutors said.

Kaing Guek Eav, known also as Duch, was given a 35-year prison term for atrocities committed at the S-21 prison camp operated by the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia during the 1970s.

Duch commanded the S-21 prison where thousands of detainees were killed in an area now known as the "killing fields." An estimated 2 million Cambodians died under Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s.

The court said in its July 26 ruling that "every individual" imprisoned at the S-21 prison facility was designated for execution. The court reduced the sentence for Duch, however, because of time served.

Prosecutors have filed an appeal against the ruling, saying the court placed "undue weight" on the crimes when determining the sentence for Duch.

The sentence "gives insufficient weight to the gravity of Duch's crimes and his role and his willing participation in those crimes," the U.N. news agency quoted the prosecution as saying.

The 67-year-old Duch was the first member of the Khmer Rouge regime to stand trial before the U.N.-backed Cambodian tribunal.