



Cambodian Media Publish K. Rouge Jailer's Apology February 21, 2012

Cambodia's UN-backed war crimes court said Tuesday that media in the kingdom were publishing an apology by a Khmer Rouge jailer imprisoned for life in a bid to provide "reparation" to genocide victims.

Kaing Guek Eav, who oversaw the deaths of some 15,000 people at S-21 prison in the late 1970s, earlier this month had his punishment for war crimes and crimes against humanity increased on appeal.

The court said that statements of apology and acknowledgements of responsibility made by the defendant -- better known as Duch -- during his trial were being published in newspapers, websites as well as radio and television stations starting on Tuesday.

"The publishing of these statements is one form of reparation for the victims," tribunal spokesman Lars Olsen told AFP.

Chum Mey, 81, one of the few survivors to leave S-21 alive, welcomed the initiative. "It's right to publish the statements through newspapers, radio, and television stations because more people would see and hear the words," he said.

During his nine-month trial Duch repeatedly apologised for his role at S-21, but later surprised the court by asking to be acquitted.

Led by Pol Pot, who died in 1998, the Khmer Rouge was responsible for one of the worst horrors of the 20th century, wiping out up to two million people through starvation, overwork and execution.

A second trial involving the regime's three most senior surviving leaders opened late last year.

Unlike the UN tribunals set up overseas to deal with war crimes in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the Cambodian tribunal was created in the country where the Khmer Rouge massacres were committed.

It aims to communicate its methods and results with the Cambodian people, in order to foster greater public understanding of a chapter of history still largely overlooked by local school textbooks.