



**'Don't call me Brother No.2': KRouge defendant  
December 14, 2011**

PHNOM PENH — The former deputy leader of the Khmer Rouge told Cambodia's UN-backed war crimes court on Wednesday that he was never called "Brother Number Two", a nickname he said was "too big" for him.

Giving evidence at his landmark atrocities trial, alongside two other senior members of the brutal 1970s regime, Nuon Chea said there "was no such thing" as a hierarchy numbering system within the Khmer Rouge.

"I am not 'Brother Number Two'," the 85-year-old said, though he admitted he was the deputy secretary of the party and "one step below" leader Pol Pot -- who died in 1998 and was widely known as "Brother Number One".

The hardline communist Khmer Rouge emptied cities, abolished money and religion and wiped out nearly a quarter of the population through starvation, overwork or execution in a bid to create an agrarian utopia.

Nuon Chea, ex-foreign minister Ieng Sary and ex-head of state Khieu Samphan all deny charges of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity for their roles in a regime blamed for the deaths of up to two million people.

The trio's long-awaited trial is seen as vital to healing wounds in the still-traumatized nation and hundreds of Cambodians again packed the public gallery to see Nuon Chea, wearing a black jumper and jacket, take the stand.

"So 'Brother Number Two' to me seems too big for me," the elderly defendant said. "I have never used 'Brother Number Two' and in the party no one called me 'Brother Number Two' at all."

He added that he believed the moniker was popularised by Cambodians who had studied in neighbouring Vietnam and copied that country's culture of assigning numbers to indicate ranks.

The first phase of the trial will focus on the forced evacuation of over two million residents from Phnom Penh to work in rural areas, a decision Nuon Chea said was made without input from fellow accused Khieu Samphan.

"He had no business to do with the evacuation or otherwise of the people. It was not his task," Nuon Chea said.

On Tuesday, Khieu Samphan told judges he was a mere figurehead who had no real power in the party. The French-educated intellectual has always insisted he knew nothing, until long afterwards, of the mass killings under the regime.