

Duch to Testify in Case 002 Bridget Di Certo March 19, 2012

The first war criminal to be convicted by Cambodia's Khmer Rouge tribunal will testify in the court's landmark Case 002 today.

Convicted S-21 prison chief Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, was sentenced to life imprisonment by the tribunal on appeal in February for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In the first case against Duch, who was found responsible for the deaths of more than 12,000 men, women and children at the notorious torture and interrogation facility, judges found that "Brother Number 2" Nuon Chea, currently on trial, was Duch's supervisor.

The UN-backed tribunal is tasked with trying the senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime and those most responsible for the regime's atrocities.

Prosecutors believe Duch has a unique insight into the structure of the central committee of the Khmer Rouge.

Duch, who was due to testify tomorrow, has been called to the courtroom earlier after Nuon Chea, the regime's chief ideologue, announced this morning that he would exercise his right to remain silent.

Judges had anticipated questioning the senior leader on administrative structures of the regime and his roles and responsibilities.

However, Nuon Chea reiterated a request repeatedly made by his defense lawyers that the court consider the effect of the American B52 bomb bombardment of Cambodia from 1965-1973 and the death and destruction caused by this. When judges did not specifically rule in favour of Nuon Chea's request, Nuon Chea elected to remain silent.

Duch, who was famously candid and cooperative giving testimony in Case 001, will be questioned by tribunal judges this afternoon about the administrative structure of the regime, the roles and responsibilities of the accused and communications lines.