



Nuon Chea calls trial accusations ‘wrong’ November 22, 2011

Nuon Chea, the man known as Brother No. 2 of the Khmer Rouge, addressed tribunal judges on Tuesday, rejecting the prosecution’s statements and saying he had worked for the good of the nation.

Nuon Chea is on trial for atrocity crimes, including genocide, along with Khieu Samphan, the regime’s nominal leader, and Ieng Sary, its foreign minister, in the UN-backed court’s second case against jailed leaders.

Prosecutors say the three men could not credibly claim they did not know what was happening in the country, as mass atrocity crimes took place.

“All accusations against me are wrong,” said Nuon Chea, who was the influential ideologue of the regime, in a nearly one-and-a-half-hour rebuttal to the prosecution. “My position in the revolutionary resistance was for the interest of the nation and the citizens. And it was not for the killings, or the so-called genocide.”

Prosecutors allege that Nuon Chea and the two other men were responsible for mass crimes against Cambodians, through starvation, execution, torture, illegal imprisonment, forced relocation, forced marriage and the attempted eradication of Cham Muslims and ethnic Vietnamese Cambodians.

Outside the courtroom, meanwhile, Cambodian victims and former cadre alike gathered to witness the opening salvos of the landmark trial.

Chhim Phan, a 72-year-old former Khmer Rouge cadre, said he had been ordered from “top leaders” to killing a young couple who had fallen in love. The couple was beaten to death by hoes and clubs in front of others from their commune, he said.

“I’m happy to come here,” he said. “I want to show the public that we didn’t kill people by our own selves. We received an order to commit the killing.”

Bou Meng, a survivor of the Tuole Sleng torture center, said he had come to learn the truth, after a long wait. “Who was the mastermind? Who ordered the killing? They should speak frankly. If they hide information, it will affect the next generation of Cambodians.”