



UN rights office denies Duch allegations
Kong Sothnarith
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Christopher Peschoux, the head of the UN's office of human rights in Cambodia, reiterated on Friday denials that he had attempted to help a Khmer Rouge leader out of the country.

Prime Minister Hun Sen raised the issue on the first visit of a new UN rights envoy, Surya Subedi, following testimony by jailed prison chief Duch that Peschoux offered to help him leave the country in 1999.

Peschoux, who was once a rights monitor, said Wednesday he was seeking to clarify the "misunderstanding" with Om Yentieng, the head of the government's human rights committee and a senior adviser to Hun Sen. No meeting has yet been set.

Peschoux interviewed Duch in Battambang province over three days in May 1999.

"We met Mr. Duch. We made a long interview, which was completely free, like we did with other persons in general, and we did not have any intention to encourage him to leave the country," Peschoux said.

Duch is under trial for the atrocity of at least 12,380 deaths. Peschoux said he was disappointed with the allegations made by Duch, but they were not surprising.