



**War crimes court sets decision date for Khmer Rouge security chief
November 17, 2011**

Phnom Penh - Cambodia's war crimes court announced Thursday it would deliver its decision in the appeal of the Khmer Rouge's former security chief on February 3.

The United Nations-backed tribunal last year sentenced the man known as Comrade Duch to 30 years after finding him guilty of involvement in the deaths of at least 12,272 detainees at the secret S-21 prison between 1976-79.

Mitigating factors and time already served that meant Duch would serve 19 years.

At his appeal hearing in March, Duch told the court he should be freed. He claimed international law did not apply to him, and said he had merely been following orders.

Duch, who is 69 and whose real name is Kaing Guek Eav, said the movement's senior leaders were responsible because it was they who had devised the regime's policies.

The trial proper of the four surviving Khmer Rouge leaders is scheduled to start on November 23.

At the appeal hearing the prosecution asked the judges to impose a sentence of at least 45 years, saying Duch's expressions of remorse were bogus and describing the original sentence as 'manifestly inadequate.'

Duch stunned the court at the end of his original trial in 2009 when he reversed his 'guilty but sorry' plea and asked to be acquitted and released.

Duch was the first person found guilty by the international court of crimes committed under the Khmer Rouge regime, which ruled Cambodia between 1975-79. The tribunal has estimated as many as 2.2 million people died from execution, starvation, overwork and disease.