



UN-backed Cambodia Court Rejects Bail For Khmer Rouge Leader AFP

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Cambodia's U.N.-backed war crimes tribunal Tuesday rejected a bid for bail by former Khmer Rouge leader Nuon Chea, saying his detention was necessary to prevent trial tampering and to ensure he appears.

The former "Brother Number Two" is the most senior of five Khmer Rouge leaders detained on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity by the court. Nuon Chea, 82, was arrested in 2007 at his home in the northwestern province of Pailin, a former Khmer Rouge stronghold.

He denies the charges against him and claims his arrest was illegal, lodging an appeal soon after his pretrial detention was extended for a year last September.

But the tribunal's pretrial chamber said in a statement Nuon Chea should remain behind bars as "a necessary measure to prevent the charged person from exerting pressure on witnesses or destroying evidence."

The statement said Nuon Chea's incarceration would ensure he was present for his future court hearings.

Nuon Chea was the closest deputy of Khmer Rouge supreme leader Pol Pot, and was allegedly the architect of the regime's devastating execution policies during its 1975-79 rule.

Up to two million people died of starvation or overwork or were executed under the Khmer Rouge, which dismantled modern Cambodian society in its effort to forge a radical agrarian utopia.

The ongoing first Khmer Rouge trial began in February, when the regime's notorious prison chief, Kaing Guek Eav, better known by the alias Duch, went before the court.

The genocide tribunal was convened in 2006 after nearly a decade of fractious talks between the government and United Nations over how to prosecute the former Khmer Rouge leaders.