

## **Khmer Rouge accused's trial at closing November 23, 2009**

Former Khmer Rouge prison chief Kaing Guek Eav, accused of crimes against humanity, faced closing arguments Monday at his trial in Cambodia.

The 67-year-old accused, also known as Comrade Duch, could be sent to prison for life if convicted in the deaths in the 1970s of more than 14,000 people in the Tuol Sleng prison and torture house, The New York Times reported.

His case is the first of a United Nations-backed tribunal looking into the atrocities of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge regime from 1975 to 1979 in which about 1.7 million people died.

Duch's lawyer has asked his client be given credit for having accepted his role and responsibility in the deaths.

But at the closing session, Karim Khan, one of the lawyers for the victims, rejected Duch's contrition and said he had "sought to evade or minimize his role" during the hearings which began in February in Phnom Penh, The Times reported.

The closing arguments were expected to go through the week. The verdict may come by early next year, the report said.

Four other senior Khmer Rouge leaders now in custody are awaiting a similar trial. The Khmer Rouge's top leader Pol Pot died in 1998.