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## **Khmer Rouge Tribunal Enters Final Phase**

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BANGKOK — Closing arguments began Monday in Cambodia in the trial of the former Khmer Rouge prison chief who is accused of crimes against humanity in the deaths of more than 14,000 people in the Tuol Sleng prison and torture house.

The case against Kaing Guek Eav, commonly known as Duch, is the first in a United Nations-backed tribunal that addresses the crimes of the Khmer Rouge regime, which caused the deaths of 1.7 million people from 1975 to 1979.

The closing sessions began Monday with a statement by one of the lawyers, Karim Khan, who said that despite what he called “crocodile tears” of contrition, Duch had “sought to evade or minimize his role” during nine months of hearings. Mr. Khan is representing victims who have been allowed to participate in the case as civil parties.

Duch, 67, is also charged with war crimes, murder and torture and faces a maximum penalty of life in prison. There is no death penalty in Cambodia, and the government is jointly administering the international tribunal in the capital Phnom Penh.

The trial began in February.

The final sessions are scheduled to last through the week and are expected to conclude with a statement from Duch, who has admitted to directing the torture and killings. He has said he would beg forgiveness from a still-traumatized nation.

A verdict is expected early next year.

After that, four senior Khmer Rouge leaders now in custody are expected to face similar charges in a second phase of the tribunal. Pol Pot, the top leader of the Khmer Rouge, died in 1998.