

New Zealander gives testimony at Duch trial

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The brother of a New Zealand man tortured and killed by the Khmer Rouge on Monday (August 17) had a courtroom confrontation with the man who had him executed, wishing him a similar gruesome fate.

Kerry Hamill was 28 when he was captured by the Khmer Rouge after his yacht was blown off course into Cambodian waters in 1978. He and a shipmate were taken to Phnom Penh's notorious S-21 prison.

About a dozen Westerners were among the estimated 16-thousand people held there before being put to death in 1975-79.

His brother, Rob Hamill, wept as he testified on Monday at the genocide trial of S-21's commander, Kaing Guek Eav, also known as Duch.

Rob Hamill: "Duch, at times I have wanted to smash you, to use your words. In the same way that you smashed so many others. At times I've imagined you shackled, stabbed, whipped and clubbed viciously, viciously! I have imagined your scrotum electrified, being forced to eat your own faeces, being nearly drowned and having your throat cut."

Earlier this week, Duch asked the Cambodian people to give him "the harshest punishment." Duch is being tried for crimes against humanity, war crimes, murder and torture.

Up to 16-thousand people were tortured under his command and later killed during the Khmer Rouge's 1975-1979 rule. Only a handful survived.

Duch later became an evangelical Christian and worked for international aid organisations after the ouster of the Khmer Rouge. Duch is the first of five senior Khmer Rouge figures scheduled to face long-delayed trials and the only one to acknowledge responsibility for his actions. His trial, which started in March, is expected to finish by the end of the year. He could face a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. Cambodia has no death penalty.