



NZ man seeks justice for brother at KRouge trial

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August 17, 2009

A New Zealand Olympic rower told Cambodia's UN-backed war crimes court Monday how he had felt like killing the boss of the Khmer Rouge prison where his brother was killed by the regime.

Rob Hamill's brother Kerry was one of three foreigners who were murdered by the 1975-1979 communist movement after their yacht was blown off course and into Cambodian waters.

Hamill, who represented New Zealand at the 1996 Olympics, was testifying at the trial of jail chief Duch, who was accused of overseeing the torture and execution of about 15,000 people at the Tuol Sleng detention centre.

"At times I have wanted to smash you, to use your word, in the same way that you smashed so many others," he said. Duch has said that the Khmer Rouge used the official term "smash" to refer to killing its enemies.

"Today, in this court room, I am giving you all the crushing weight of emotion -- the anger, the grief, and the sorrow. I am placing this emotional burden on your head," Hamill said.

Kerry Hamill, 27, was sailing through the Gulf of Thailand in 1978 with two friends, Canadian Stuart Glass and Briton John Dewhirst, when their yacht was intercepted by a Cambodian patrol boat.

Glass was shot dead immediately while Dewhirst and Hamill were taken for interrogation and torture at Tuol Sleng for two months, during which they were forced to confess to being CIA agents. They were then killed.

Earlier Monday, Frenchwoman Martine Lefeuvre wept as she told the tribunal how her Cambodian husband was tricked into returning from overseas to die at Tuol Sleng.

She said her French-educated spouse, Ouk Ket, was asked to return home in 1977 from his job as a diplomat in Senegal, Dakar, to help the reconstruction of Cambodia.

But she said that on arrival Ouk Ket was "kidnapped with his hands tied behind his back, blindfolded, and brought in a truck" and went to "hell" at the jail.

Lefevre said that in 1991 she and her family came to see Tuol Sleng, which was turned into a genocide museum after the fall of the Khmer Rouge, and found his name on a list of the dead.

"I came before this chamber in order to ask for justice to be done for this barbaric crime," the 56-year-old nurse told the court, demanding the "maximum sentence" for Duch.

Duch, a 66-year-old former maths teacher whose real name is Kaing Guek Eav, said he felt remorse for their suffering.

"I was such a coward at that time. I did not dare to assist anybody," Duch told Hamill. Duch has previously accepted responsibility for running the jail and begged forgiveness, but insists that he did not have a central role in the Khmer Rouge hierarchy.

Led by Pol Pot, who died in 1998, the Khmer Rouge emptied Cambodia's cities in a bid to forge an agrarian utopia, resulting in the deaths of up to two million people from starvation, overwork and torture.