



## **Former Khmer Rouge Head Of State Denied Release July 3, 2009**

Judges Friday rejected the former Khmer Rouge head of state's appeal for release from jail before his trial at Cambodia's U.N.- backed war crimes court.

Khieu Samphan, 77 years old, who is charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes, is one of five top cadres being held by the tribunal over atrocities committed during the regime's 1975-1979 rule.

The former leader appealed in April to be let out of jail, but judges ruled his detention was necessary to protect his security and preserve public order.

"There continue to be well-founded reasons to believe that the charged person may have committed the crimes with which he has been charged," said the pre- trial chamber ruling.

"The charged person attended at least one meeting where the situation of traitors and their potential execution was discussed," it added.

Up to 2 million people were executed or died of starvation and overwork as the Khmer Rouge regime emptied Cambodia's cities, exiling the population to vast collective farms in its bid for a communist 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.

Khieu Samphan was arrested in 2007, but no date has been set for his trial with three other leaders, which is expected to take place next year.

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