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Khmer Rouge Official to be Detained Until Late 2008

The former chief of a Khmer Rouge torture centre will be detained until late next year as the country prepares for the genocide trial of Pol Pot's henchman.

A military court says Duch, the 65-year-old former head of the notorious Tuol Sleng S-21 interrogation centre, has been in prison and awaiting trial on genocide charges since 1999.

The court director says Duch, whose real name is Kaing Kek Ieu, will be freed on November 10 next year if he has not faced trial by then.

Duch's lawyer says he wrote a letter to the court on Monday demanding a speedy trial for his client.

No Khmer Rouge leader has ever faced credible justice for the estimated 1.7 million people who died in the "Killing Fields".

Cambodian and international judges sitting on the Khmer Rouge tribunal will hold talks this week to resolve a disagreement between local and UN-backed officials on the rules of the court.

Diplomats say the UN side of the court will walk away if they feel their local counterparts are dragging their feet.

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