

The Phnom Penh Post

KRT ends evidence phase in Duch trial **Robbie Corey-Boulet and Cheang Sokha** **September 18, 2009**

The Khmer Rouge tribunal concluded its hearing of evidence in the trial of Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, commandant of the infamous Tuol Sleng prison where thousands were tortured and consigned to execution.

“I would like to declare the adjournment to this morning’s proceedings now,” chief Judge Nil Nonn told the court, officially ending testimony.

Since the substantive portion of the trial began March 30, the tribunal has heard testimony from seven character witnesses, nine expert witnesses, 17 fact witnesses and 22 civil parties, with 23,742 visitors having observed the tribunal from the public gallery, a statement from the tribunal said.

With testimony and evidence presentation having come to an end, any further hearings prior to the start of the tribunal’s closing arguments on November 23 “will be only related to the evidence submitted [Wednesday] and [Thursday]”, UN court spokesman Lars Olsen said Thursday.

Sitting calmly in the dock, Duch has largely cooperated with the court, offering his comments as officials traced how he took part in the Khmer Rouge’s rise to power and then oversaw Tuol Sleng with brutal efficiency.

“I think the fact that you had a very articulate defendant made this a very meaningful case for the people of Cambodia,” said Heather Ryan, who monitors the court for the Open Society Justice Initiative.

Also Thursday, the National Audit Authority chairman officially became independent counsellor at the tribunal, a role created in part to field corruption complaints, Olsen said.

The government and the UN announced the appointment of Uth Chhorn last month, more than two years after allegations first surfaced that tribunal employees had been forced to turn over a percentage of their salaries to their superiors.

A joint press release dated August 11 hailed the appointment as “a further step to help strengthen the human resources management in the entire [tribunal] administration,

including anti-corruption measures, to ensure the requirements of due process of law”.

But the release did not describe the specific ways in which Uth Chhorn would be empowered to resolve complaints.

Uth Chhorn declined to comment Thursday in advance of a press conference scheduled for Wednesday.

Also Thursday, Civil Parties Group 3 filed an additional reparations brief to go along with the joint submission from all four civil party groups.

Lawyer Moch Sovannary told the Post: “My group fully associates itself to the important joint submission filed today by all the civil party lawyers. In addition, my group is also filing today a separate additional brief requesting the [Trial Chamber] to preserve the memory of the victims who disappeared at S-21 and aimed at making sure that these tragedies and sufferings do not occur again in my country”.