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Prosecutors complete submissions for Duch case

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Exactly one year after filing their Introductory Submission -- requesting the arrests of the five defendants now in custody -- Co-Prosecutors for the Khmer Rouge Tribunal have finished their Final Submission in the case of Comrade Duch. This is the information the Co-Investigating Judges will use for a potential indictment to send Duch to trial.

The Final Submission consists of nearly 200 pages of "factual and legal arguments," and "represents a comprehensive overview of what the Co-Prosecutors deem to be the relevant evidence contained in the case file," according to a release from the ECCC.

Co-Prosecutors argue that the Tuol Sleng torture chief should be charged with crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and the crimes of torture and homicide under the Cambodian Penal Code of 1956. To gather necessary evidence, over 63 witnesses were interviewed by the Co-Investigating Judges and Duch himself consented to 21 interviews.

All of these testimonies have "provided a harrowing depiction of the crimes committed at S-21," according to the court. "That evidence brought forth at the trial will stand as a public and permanent testimony of the brutality of the regime and the criminality of those who functioned within it."

Of note: The prosecutors have filed their Final Submission nearly three weeks in advance of their August 7 deadline. This gives those of us watching the court hope that a trial for Duch may, indeed, begin in September.