



Detention extended for KRouge official facing trial: officials September 19, 2008

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Khmer Rouge leader Nuon Chea's detention has been extended another year while he awaits trial at Cambodia's UN-backed genocide tribunal, court officials said Friday.

"They believe conditions still require his detention," tribunal spokeswoman Helen Jarvis told AFP, referring to court judges.

The former "Brother Number Two" is the most senior of five Khmer Rouge leaders detained on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity by the court.

Nuon Chea, 82, was arrested a year ago at his home in the northwestern province of Pailin, a former Khmer Rouge stronghold.

He has denied the accusations against him and claims his arrest was illegal.

Nuon Chea's lawyer Son Arun confirmed the detention had been renewed over defence team objections.

"The judges said they have not yet finished the investigation against him. So they have extended the detention of Nuon Chea for another year," he said, adding that he intended to appeal the decision.

Nuon Chea was the closest deputy of Khmer Rouge supreme leader Pol Pot, and was allegedly the architect of the regime's devastating execution policies during its 1975-1979 rule.

Up to two million people died of starvation, overwork or execution under the the Khmer Rouge, which dismantled modern Cambodian society in its effort to forge a radical agrarian utopia.

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

The first trial is expected to begin later this year.