More Cambodian-Americans will be seeking a place at Khmer Rouge tribunal hearings, with the help of a US-based organization.

The Center for Justice and Accountability is helping organize applications for victims of the regime who fled to the US but who have the right under tribunal rules to file grievances and applications to be witnesses.

A team from the center is now in Cambodia to help move the process along, as the court moves toward a trial of four top leaders.

Henry Chhon is among about a dozen Cambodian-Americans to have filed at the UN-backed court with the help of the center.

He was recently accepted as a participant in the court’s second case, to try senior leaders Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary and Ieng Thirith.
“I am happy I was accepted,” Chhon said in an interview Wednesday.

A former soldier for the US-supported Lon Nol regime before the fall of Phnom Penh, Chhon said he was able to hide his past from the Khmer Rouge. His uncle, who had also been a Lon Nol soldier, was picked up by the regime and sent to a re-education camp, never to return.

His civil party application was originally denied by the court, but it was accepted on appeal and announced at a preliminary hearing Monday. He will be among nearly 1,700 other participants represented by lawyers in the court when a trial for the four leaders begins in earnest later this year.

“I feel calmer now that I am now able to speak out and participate in other activities with other survivors,” he said. “I am satisfied that this trial is taking place.”

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