



KRouge jail chief tells of experiments, blood draining
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The former Khmer Rouge prison chief told Cambodia's UN-backed war crimes court Monday that some inmates had blood completely drained from their bodies or were used for medical experiments.

Kaing Guek Eav, better known by his nom de guerre Duch, was answering judges' questions about conditions at Tuol Sleng prison, where he supervised the torture and extermination of up to 15,000 people.

"First, live prisoners were used for surgical study and training, second blood drawing was also done," Duch told the court.

The testimony represented a new admission of guilt for Duch, who previously stated he knew nothing of prisoners being drained of blood.

In the morning of one of the most dramatic days so far in his crimes against humanity trial, Duch at one point became visibly distraught while talking about which prisoners were tortured and judges gave him some time to compose himself.

Duch also also told the court that Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot knew prisoners' confessions, usually extracted through torture, were false.

"Pol Pot, at one point, did not even believe the confessions were of true information," Duch said.

Duch added he also did not believe most confessions and told the court how he was summoned by his superior, defence minister Son Sen, and asked why his staff had not found any information about the CIA's agenda.

"It was required for us to seek out CIA agents... As a result, there were many CIA agents in the confessions," Duch said.

"All the prisoners, from what I could conclude... who claimed they were CIA agents, no they were not," he said, adding that he ran into further problems with his superiors when one man confessed to being a Soviet agent.

Thereafter, he said, his staff also obtained confessions from many prisoners saying they were working for the KGB, the Soviet Union's spy agency.

However, Duch also sought to demonstrate he showed compassion for some of the doomed inmates at Tuol Sleng.

He told the court he had not approved torture through electrocution of genitals and became "very angry" when he learned a male interrogator had sexual abused a female inmate.

He also said he disobeyed an order by "Brother Number Two" Nuon Chea to poison several inmates, filling capsules with headache medicine instead.

"If they died then they would have died under my own act, giving them the poison. That's why I tried not to be involved in the killing of those people directly," Duch said.

Earlier in his trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity, Duch accepted responsibility for his role in the 1975 to 1979 communist regime and begged forgiveness from its victims.

He has, however, consistently denied prosecutors' claims that he played a central role in the Khmer Rouge's iron-fisted rule and maintains he tortured only two people himself and never personally executed anyone.

The 66-year-old former maths teacher was arrested by Cambodian authorities in 1999 and judges on Monday ruled he was "entitled to a remedy" because it was "unlawful" he had spent so long in detention before the case came to court.

The ruling appeared to be a small victory for Duch, whose lawyers in April argued he had been held illegally and urged the judges to compensate by subtracting time from his final sentence and softening their eventual verdict.

Pol Pot died in 1998, and many believe the tribunal is the last chance to find justice for victims of the regime, which killed up to two million people.

The court was formed in 2006 after nearly a decade of wrangling between the United Nations and the Cambodian government, and is expected next year to begin the trial of four other senior Khmer Rouge leaders also in detention.