

# The Phnom Penh Post

**New S-21 abuse claim**  
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*Court hears witness who altered her story from her application.*

A civil party told Cambodia's war crimes court Thursday that one of her brothers who was working as a guard at Tuol Sleng prison was ordered to execute their father before he himself was killed.

Nam Mon, 48, said she worked as a medic at the secret detention facility, also known as S-21, until she was arrested in 1978. She said she, her father, her mother and all four of her brothers were detained there, and that only she escaped execution, after being sent to Prey Sar, or S-24.

Her testimony was prefaced by comments from her lawyer, Silke Studzinsky, who said that Nam Mon's story had been altered since she originally applied to become a civil party. Studzinsky said her client had come forward with her new story about 10 days ago.

Four civil parties had their testimonies challenged by judges and lawyers this week, including two whose testimonies were said to have deviated from their civil party applications. The trend has raised concerns from one defence team that the applications have not been thoroughly vetted.

Under questioning from Presiding Judge Nil Nonn, Nam Mon said she heard about the story of her brother killing her father from a fellow medic and did not witness the incident herself.

"I did not see him, but [the other medic] told me about the incident," she said. "She said that my brother was ordered to kill my father, and that he was later on executed, too."

She said she worked as a medic at Tuol Sleng beginning in 1975, and that two of her brothers worked as guards. She also said she saw her father shortly after he was arrested, and that she was later accused of being "a daughter of the traitor".

In an interview Thursday evening, Studzinsky said Nam Mon had not changed any aspect of her original story, but rather had elaborated on the details of how her family members were killed as well as her own role at Tuol Sleng.

"We can just say that she added more," Studzinsky said. "It's an amendment."

Nil Nonn challenged Nam Mon to demonstrate her knowledge of, among other things, the precise location and organisation of Tuol Sleng.

Her account of Tuol Sleng diverged in several respects from those offered by other witnesses and civil parties. She said she was interrogated in the same room where she was held, whereas others have reported being taken to a separate interrogation room. She said guards tightened the shackle that had been placed around her ankle during interrogations, though she did not mention other frequently cited torture methods such as beatings and electrocution.

Although shackle-tightening has not been one of the torture methods frequently cited, Studzinsky said she had "no doubt" that Nam Mon's account was true.

"We do not know about how female prisoners and staff members were then treated," Studzinsky said, noting that no other female Tuol Sleng survivors had testified at the court.

In her prefatory remarks, Studzinsky said her client's testimony would include references to prison chief Kaing Guek Eav's personal and physical involvement "in treatment towards two of her relatives who were imprisoned in Tuol Sleng". No such references were made Thursday, and Studzinsky declined to elaborate Thursday evening, though she said she hoped the topic would be raised when testimony continues Monday morning.

### **Female detainees**

Also Thursday, the court heard the conclusion of testimony from Chin Meth, a civil party who described how women who were detained during the Khmer Rouge years tried to help one another overcome beatings, forced labour and thoughts of suicide.

Chin Meth, 51, said she was recruited against her will to fight for the Khmer Rouge in 1974 and joined an all-female soldier unit.

She said the unit was trained to use weapons including rocket launchers, grenades and AK-47s. Because she could not handle them, she was tasked with carrying weapons and ammunition to soldiers at the front, she said.

She was eventually arrested and detained for 15 days at a facility she could not identify before being sent to Prey Sar. At the first facility, she said she was beaten with a stick, and she described how a fellow detainee tied a krama around her leg to stanch the bleeding from wounds she sustained.

She said she was detained in a cell with two other women, and that the three of them contemplated suicide.

"If there was a tool nearby, then we would all agree to commit suicide," she said.  
"However, in that room there was no tool.... We thought of committing suicide, but we had no opportunity."

She added: "We understood one another very well. We knew the suffering, and we knew that we could not stand the situation. We wished that we could be living peacefully with our parents. We were betrayed. That's why we made the decision to commit suicide together."