

Under Duch, no care for pregnant inmates Heng Reaksmey June 24, 2009

At least eight women who were pregnant during their incarceration at a prison run by Kaing Kek Iev were "not well treated," the former Khmer Rouge administrator better known as Duch told tribunal judges Wednesday.

"The ladies who were pregnant were not allowed to go to the hospital," Duch said, referring to women who were held at Prey Sar prison, which he administered along with the torture center, Tuol Sleng.

"I myself and my wife never thought about health care," he said.

When pregnant women gave birth at Prey Sar, known to the Khmer Rouge as S-24, they did so without expert nurses, he said, by the traditional method.

Even outside of prison, women who had given birth were sent to work as soon as they seemed strong enough.

"The mother can work in the field and keep her baby in the shade of a tree," he told the Trial Chamber's chief judge, Nil Non.

Duch, now 66, is facing charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, torture and murder for his role as administrator of Tuol Sleng, Prey Sar and the "killing fields" of Choeung Ek, an execution site on the outskirts of Phnom Penh.

Duch said he had not concerned himself with the health of prisons.

Prosecutors blame him for the deaths of 12,380 people.