

The Phnom Penh Post

KR trial resumes with Duch admitting to forged confessions **Cheang Sokha and Georgia Wilkins** **May 19, 2009**

Says power struggle between Ta Mok, Pol Pot required him to 'amend' statements to reflect changes in focus on shifting political enemies.

Former Khmer Rouge prison chief Kaing Guek Eav told Cambodia's war crimes court Monday that he was forced to forge "enemy" confessions because of a power struggle between two of the regime's top leaders, as the trial of the ex-jailer resumed following a two-week recess.

"The extraction of confessions related to the power struggle in the regime between Ta Mok and Pol Pot," the accused, better known by his revolutionary name Duch, told the court, referring to confessions made at Tuol Sleng prison, or S-21, over which he presided.

"The way they chose people to be arrested was organised and planned by the standing committee," he added, describing the situation with one of the regime's idioms: "When cutting bamboo, one must trim the thorns."

Duch's comments were in response to questions by judges who wished to clarify testimony he had already given about confessions at the regime's most notorious torture centre.

He said he would often be required to amend prisoners' confessions at the request of his superiors, depending on their political enemies at the time.

"[Deceased KR senior leader and Central Committee member] Son Sen asked me, 'Why did this person not implicate [cadre] Pon?' I told him he did confess and implicate [Pon]," Duch said, citing an example in which he was forced to frame a fellow cadre.

"As Pol Pot said in the minutes of a meeting on October 9, 1975, 'The police are one thing, but here, whether we arrest anyone, it's up to us'," he added.

Following Duch's remarks, genocide expert Craig Etcheson took the stand, becoming the first foreign specialist to be heard at the court.

Etcheson, who cited his occupation as an investigator with co-prosecutors at the tribunal, is the author of *The Rise and Demise of Democratic Kampuchea* and has studied the structures of the regime for three decades.

"The CPK [party's] statutes required each echelon to report regularly to its superior echelon," he said, describing the way in which the standing committee monitored the regime.

He also claimed that cadres who were viewed as "not pure" by the party were weeded out through "disciplinary measures", including execution. Etcheson's testimony is to continue this week.

Court reshuffle

In a press statement issued late Monday, the ECCC announced several personnel changes at the hybrid court.

Helen Jarvis, former chief of public affairs, will now head the Victims Unit, while the court's press officer, Reach Sambath, has been tapped to serve as head of public affairs.

Other personnel changes include the appointment of Dim Sovannarom as press officer and Neou Kassie as outreach coordinator.