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**Duch: I had to follow orders**  
**Neth Pheaktra and Georgia Wilkins**  
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*Former S-21 chief says he tried to distance himself from the torture prison but ran into resistance from his superiors.*

Former S-21 prison chief Kaing Guek Eav told the Khmer Rouge tribunal Monday that he would have been beheaded had he not strictly followed the orders of his superiors as he appeared to try to remove himself from the more murderous aspects of the detention centre.

As part of continued questioning about his role as head of the security complex, the 66-year-old former cadre, known as Duch, used documents from his case file to maintain that he had tried to "distance" himself from the prison, but had little success.

"I [wanted to] distance myself from S-21. I did not want the police work.... I asked if I could be transferred to the industrial section, but Son Sen did not agree. He asked me ... Why do I not take this position?" Duch told the court.

"Comrade Nuon [Chea] threatened me. He said don't forget the chief of S-21 is me ... and then I could not distance myself," he said.

Showing prisoner confessions that had been annotated by himself and superiors, including Brother No 2 Nuon Chea, Duch said he had no choice but to keep such meticulous records.

Though Duch has acknowledged and apologised for his crimes, he has also maintained that he was the victim of an ideological machine that allowed for little individual choice.

However, during Monday's proceedings, Duch admitted that he had contributed to the purging of his staff for minor mistakes.

"The purges went on and only a few people were left.... When the husband was smashed, the wife would also be smashed [killed]," he said.

"The staff of S-21 was arrested by S-21. S-21 detained them, S-21 interrogated them with torture and finally they were smashed by S-21," he said, adding that he had turned two truckloads of "gentle" teenagers brought to S-21 from Kampong Chhnang into killers

through re-education programs and relied on discretion when it came to the executions at Choeung Ek.

"The guards who were stationed at Choeung Ek ... they were responsible for digging the pits and burying the corpses," he said.

"They were living with the corpses.... They were careful to make sure people could not see where the bodies were buried."

Duch insisted, however, that the 10 ruthless rules that were supposedly upheld at the prison - and are still on display at the genocide museum today - were fabricated by the Vietnamese after the 1979 fall of the regime, a claim that Him Huy, a surviving guard from the prison, disputed.

"During the KR regime, all guards were obliged to know all disciplines, and the 10 disciplines at S-21 were written by Duch," Him Huy said.

Trial judges announced Monday that the deadline for a ruling on a request by Duch's lawyers that he be released for the duration of his trial would be extended until June 15, citing delays in translating court documents.