



Khmer Rouge torturer says Jesus helped find him in hiding

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The Khmer Rouge's former chief torturer told Cambodia's UN-backed Khmer Rouge tribunal Wednesday that Jesus Christ had ordained his discovery by a journalist a decade ago when he was a fugitive with an assumed identity living in a remote village. Kaing Guek Eav, known by his revolutionary name Duch, faces charges of crimes against humanity, premeditated murder, torture and breeches of the Geneva Conventions allegedly committed while he was the warden of the S-21 torture prison in Phnom Penh.

In the third week of the tribunal's first trial, Duch said Jesus led journalist Nic Dunlop to find him in a town near the Thai border in 1999.

"I spoke to Nic Dunlop and said, 'It was Christ who brought you to meet me,'" he said. "Nic Dunlop quoted those words, and those are the words that I told him."

The 66-year-old born-again Christian recounted an interview he gave to Dunlop and fellow journalist Nate Thayer shortly before he was arrested and detained in a military prison.

He said he told Dunlop that Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot's claim that S-21 was fabricated by Vietnam after it invaded Cambodia in 1979 was a lie.

"I was chief of S-21," he said. "All the crimes there were under my responsibility."

Duch is one of five former Khmer Rouge leaders facing trial for their roles in the deaths of up to 2 million people through overwork, starvation or execution during the Maoist group's 1975-79 reign.

At least 15,000 men, women and children are believed to have been imprisoned, tortured and interrogated at S-21 before being sent to be murdered at the Cheoung Ek "killing fields" outside the Cambodian capital.

Duch earlier in the trial apologized to his victims, their families and the country but maintained that he was simply following orders.

On Wednesday, he maintained that he was mostly acting on the orders of fellow detainee and former Khmer Rouge chief ideologue Nuon Chea.

Duch's trial was expected to run into mid-June, and he faces a maximum sentence of life in prison.