



**Ex K.Rouge guard describes life under jail boss**  
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A former guard at the main Khmer Rouge torture centre wept in court on Monday as he described how he feared his prison boss, who is standing trial at Cambodia's UN-backed war crimes tribunal.

Him Huy, 54, was giving evidence against Khmer Rouge prison chief Duch, who is accused of overseeing the torture and execution of around 15,000 people held at Tuol Sleng prison, also known as S-21.

"I did not dare criticise him (Duch). I was afraid I would be killed... Even when I saw him riding a bicycle towards me, I would find a place to get away from him," Him Huy told the court.

"Frankly, when I see him it reminds me of the moment I worked with him. I was afraid of him. I did not dare look into his face. Even now I'm fearful of him," he said, weeping.

At the start of his testimony Thursday, the former guard recounted how he killed a prisoner in 1977 at Choeung Ek "killing field," under orders from either Duch or the prison chief's now-deceased deputy, Hor.

One of Him Huy's duties was to transport prisoners to former orchard Choeung Ek, where he said executioners struck prisoners with ox cart axles, slashed their throats and dumped them in pits.

The former guard told the court Monday that Duch carried a pistol with him at all times and that the boss "was rather gentle when he spoke, but he was very firm and meticulous".

Him Huy added that he believed the jail chief had the power to release inmates, contradicting Duch's claims that he was under orders to have all prisoners killed.

"At S-21, nobody ordered him (Duch). It was only him that ordered other people," Him Huy said.

"Those of us who survived, we were the lucky group and we only want justice," he added.

The 66-year-old Duch, whose real name is Kaing Guek Eav, has accepted responsibility for his role governing the jail and begged forgiveness near the start of his trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

But the defendant, who worked as a maths teacher before his role with the regime, has consistently rejected claims by prosecutors that he held a central leadership role in the Khmer Rouge, and says he never personally killed anyone.

One of the jailer's former maths students, 64-year-old Tep Sok, attended Monday's hearing and told reporters that Duch had not been a cruel teacher.

"(Duch) encouraged us to study hard and use the knowledge to serve the nation... He was strict, but was not cruel," Tep Sok said, adding that Duch had put his hands together to give him the traditional Cambodian greeting in court.

"I'm deeply disappointed and very sorrowful, but I still feel pity for him," Tep Sok said.

Led by Pol Pot, who died in 1998, the Khmer Rouge emptied Cambodia's cities in a bid to forge a communist utopia. Up to two million people died of starvation, overwork and torture or were executed during the 1975-1979 regime.

Four other former Khmer Rouge leaders are currently in detention and are expected to face trial next year at the court, which was formed in 2006 after nearly a decade of wrangling between the UN and the Cambodian government.

However the troubled tribunal also faces accusations of interference by the Cambodian government and claims that local staff were forced to pay kickbacks for their jobs.