

Duch denies much of interrogator testimony

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Jailed Khmer Rouge prison chief Duch told tribunal judges on Wednesday he did not need his subordinates to face trial for the deaths of thousands of inmates, as he refuted some testimony of a former interrogator at his prison.

Duch addressed the court following testimony of Prak Khorn, 58, who took the stand Tuesday and Wednesday, alleging he had seen an infant tossed to its death from the second story of Tuol Sleng prison, among other atrocities.

Duch, 66, whose real name is Kaing Guek Iev, is facing charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, torture and murder, for administering the Khmer Rouge prison, where prosecutors say 12,380 were sent to their deaths.

Duch said Wednesday the testimony of Prak Khorn was mostly untrue, but some of his testimony was not supported by documentary evidence. He denied his staff killed an 8-month-old infant at the prison, known to the Khmer Rouge as S-21.

“The majority of the testimony is not true,” Duch said. “It comes from fear. During that time, you feared I would arrest you. And at this time, you fear facing the court as I do. I do not demand that any of my subordinates come here to face the court. I have taken all the responsibility before the law, with my heart alone, for the framework of S-21.”

Prak Khorn also told the judges he had seen blood drained from prisoners, to resupply military hospitals, testimony that Duch conceded to. Duch said blood was taken from 100 prisoners at the order of his superior, Son Sen.

On Tuesday, Prak Khorn said he watched as a fellow interrogator at the prison took an infant from its mother “and threw it off the building.” Prak Khorn was then ordered to bury the child, he said. He was unsure the child had been killed under orders by Duch.

However, he said, torture was only performed on prisoner after Duch’s orders. This included beatings, electrocution and suffocation with plastic bags.