



Ex-Khmer Rouge medic testifies in Cambodia trial
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A former medic at the most notorious Khmer Rouge prison in Cambodia told a genocide tribunal he treated people with missing fingernails and toenails, saying Monday that hundreds of prisoners died from torture wounds.

Sek Dorn, 48, testified at the trial of Kaing Guek Eav — better known as Duch — who headed the S-21 prison in Phnom Penh. Up to 16,000 people were tortured under Duch's command and later were taken away to be killed during the Khmer Rouge's 1975-1979 rule. Only a handful survived.

"There were many prisoners who were wounded and died. There were probably hundreds," Sek Dorn said.

He told the court he was assigned to distribute medicine and clean wounds of the detainees for a year, along with three other medics who were also in their teens.

"The majority of them had wounds and sores on their bodies, especially on their backs and their heads. Some of their fingernails and toenails were missing," he said. "They were wounded by torture."

Sek Dorn said he did not personally witness the torture, but saw the effects during medical treatment.

"I did not dare ask them in detail," the former medic said. "I was afraid that I would be seen by the guards and I would be killed."

Sek Dorn said he gave the wounded traditional medicine, which was produced by Khmer Rouge medical staff.

Some 1.7 million Cambodians died of torture, execution, disease and starvation during the Khmer Rouge's rule, during which the Maoist ideologues emptied cities and forced virtually the entire population to work on farm collectives.

Duch (pronounced DOIK), 66, is the first senior Khmer Rouge figure to face trial in the U.N.-assisted tribunal and the only one to acknowledge responsibility for his actions. He is charged with crimes against humanity and is the first of five defendants scheduled for long-delayed trials.

Senior leaders Khieu Samphan, Nuon Chea, Ieng Sary and Ieng Sary's wife, Ieng Thirith, are detained and are likely to face trial in the next year or two.