

The Phnom Penh Post

S-21 inmates treated like 'animals': witness

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July 23, 2009

A former interrogator testifies that Duch was responsible for indoctrinating workers at S-21.

A former S-21 interrogator told Cambodia's war crimes tribunal Wednesday that he received instructions to treat so-called "enemies" like animals.

Speaking on the last day of his testimony, Prak Khan, 58, told the court that his former boss, Tuol Sleng prison chief Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, had delivered the instructions personally.

"At S-21, it was only Duch who indoctrinated our stance.

... We had to consider the enemies as animals," he said.

Duch challenged this assertion directly, saying, "I did not have time to provide instruction to every single interrogator, including Prak Khan."

He added: "Even with my subordinate, Comrade Pon, I did not have sufficient time to give him instruction on every single aspect."

Duch said Prak Khan's statements had been influenced by the fact that he feared being prosecuted himself, adding that he didn't recognise the witness because he was "minor staff".

"At that time you were afraid, you were fearful of being arrested by me, but now you are afraid that you might face the court as I am now," said Duch, who is on trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

"I do not demand or need any of my subordinates to stand with me before the chamber."

Local visitors reach 12,000

Court spokesman Reach Sambath told reporters at a press conference Wednesday that more than 12,000 Cambodians had attended the trial since March 30.

"We are pleased that the people of Cambodia have paid much attention to this process," he said.

Another witness, Kok Sros, a former security guard at S-21, was called by the court Wednesday and is expected to give the bulk of his testimony today.