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## **Duch rebuts torture claim**

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The Khmer Rouge tribunal heard further claims on Tuesday that Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, participated in the interrogation and physical abuse of Tuol Sleng detainees - an accusation promptly denied by the prison chief.

Sam Meth, 51, said Monday that he worked as a guard at the prison and saw Duch personally beat a detainee with a rattan stick. On Tuesday he stood by previous statements to investigators in which he said Duch kicked and threatened detainees.

Prosecutor Anees Ahmed read from the November 2007 statements describing interrogation sessions Sam Meth said he witnessed at the "special prisons" he was tasked with guarding.

"Sometimes [Tuol Sleng senior interrogator Tuy] interrogated, and if he was unclear, then Duch came in and asked the prisoner, 'Are you going to talk to us or not?' Then Duch would kick the prisoner once or twice and say, 'Soon you will know,'" Sam Meth said in the statement.

Duch responded by saying that staff at Tuol Sleng did not deviate from strictly defined roles, and that he, as chairman, was not involved in interrogations.

"In the role of the leadership, I could not spare my time to involve [myself] in those interrogations even if I wanted to do so," he said.

Sam Meth also said on Tuesday that Duch inspected prisoners' quarters, but he backed away from his earlier claim that Duch visited the site daily.

"If he wanted to grasp the understanding of the case, he would come," he said. "Or when he was available he would just walk through ... inspecting the prisoners' rooms."

Duch, who has testified that he rarely visited Tuol Sleng, cited just three visits to interrogation rooms: two to that of Tuol Sleng senior interrogator Pon and one to that of Tuy.

Duch later agreed "in principle" with the testimony of Tuy Teng, a guard who described executions at the Choeung Ek killing fields.

"When the prisoners fell over, [the executioners] removed the handcuffs," Tuy Teng said in a statement that was read aloud. "Then they also used knives to finish killing them, but I don't know if they cut open their bellies or cut their throats. I just saw that, after the killings, they took away palm leaf blades stained with blood."