

Up to 200 children killed in Khmer Rouge death camp

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July 28, 2009

In Cambodia, the international human-rights trial of the head of the Khmer Rouge's most infamous prison has resumed. The court heard again that no child survived the camp, contradicting testimony earlier this month by a man who said he and his brother were held there as children.

A former guard and bookkeeper at the S-21 torture and extermination center, Sos Thy, says up to 200 children were separated from their parents who were brought to the camp during Khmer Rouge rule.

It was the first time a number has been put on the children killed at the camp, which was just one of hundreds used by the communist government in the mid-1970s.

Not one survived, all were killed, Sos Thy said in testimony before the Khmer Rouge tribunal. The tribunal is conducting its first trial - of Kaing Guek Eav, also known as Duch, who ran the S-21 prison in the capital, Phnom Penh.

Duch has also testified no children had survived the prison. But earlier this month, a man testified that as children he and his brother survived at the camp for a year before the Khmer Rouge were toppled by Vietnamese forces.

Although the prison kept records of adults detained and executed there, details of the children were not kept.

Sos Thy and another guard Kok Sros have told the court they lived in fear at S-21. They said they had to carry out Duch's grisly orders or face the same fate as the thousands who were sent to their deaths in Cambodia's Killing Fields.

But Theary Seng from Cambodia's Center for Social Development says their fears were an insult to the victims of the genocidal regime.

"It is disgusting that a guard of the detention center where 14,000 lives, at least, were killed brutally under torture is now claiming to be a victim. He is undermining and dishonoring genuine victims and their causes at this tribunal," said Theary Seng.

Duch is the first surviving member of the Khmer Rouge leadership to face trial. It took the Cambodian government and the United Nations more than a decade to establish the

tribunal, and during that time, many of the aging Khmer Rouge leaders died.

Duch has accepted responsibility for the operation of the prison, and has apologized to the families of its victims. But he denies the prosecution's charges he was a senior leader of the Khmer Rouge and says he never personally killed anyone.