



**Vann Nath, survivor of Khmer Rouge prison, dies**  
**September 5, 2011**

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Vann Nath, an artist who was among only seven people to survive Cambodia's most notorious prison of the 1970s Khmer Rouge regime and who later depicted the facility's horrific torture, has died, his daughter said Monday. He was 66.

Vann Nath, who had been ill for several years, died Monday after falling into a coma in late August, his daughter Vann Chan Simen said.

Vann Nath, whose death leaves only two surviving inmates of the notorious Tuol Sleng prison, was the first of the survivors to testify before a U.N.-backed tribunal that is trying members of the Khmer Rouge regime on war crimes charges.

"We are saddened by the news of the death of Mr. Vann Nath, who gave a voice to victims," tribunal spokesman Lars Olsen said.

Vann Nath in recent years had chronic kidney disease requiring regular dialysis treatment. In April 2010, he was hospitalized in critical condition with a hemorrhaging ulcer.

His widow, Kith Eng, blamed his illnesses on the torture he suffered at Tuol Sleng, telling The Associated Press in August that he would have lived a long and healthy life had it not been for his year spent there.

Born in 1946, Vann Nath trained as an artist, but was later forced to work at a cooperative farm after the Khmer Rouge seized power in April 1975.

He was accused of being an enemy of the regime in 1978 and imprisoned at Tuol Sleng, also known as S-21, and kept there until January 1979 when the regime fled ahead of invading Vietnamese troops, who found only seven inmates alive at the prison.

Between April 1975 and the late 1978 up to 16,000 people were tortured at the former school before being taken to the killing fields outside the capital and executed, most often with a blow to the back of their neck. Vann Nath was spared because he was ordered to paint and sculpt portraits of the late Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot.

He would later paint images of torture such as waterboarding at Tuol Sleng and write a memoir of his year spent there.

The regime's radical policies left about 1.7 million people dead through overwork, disease, malnutrition and execution.

In June 2009, Vann Nath testified before Cambodia's war crimes tribunal against Kaing Guek Eav — better known as Duch — who was in charge of S-21 from 1975-1978. Duch, now 68, was sentenced to 35 years in prison for war crimes and crimes against humanity in July 2010.