

Prosecutors want to show Vietnamese films at trial

Written by

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Co-Prosecutors at the tribunal have [filed a motion](#) to show archival Vietnamese footage of Tuol Sleng at the upcoming trial of "Comrade Duch."

Vietnamese authorities turned the films over to the Documentation Center of Cambodia in late December -- after prosecutors had already submitted the list of exhibits they planned to use at trial. While the motion is a relatively dry request that prosecutors be able to introduce these new exhibits, it includes some interesting details about the actual materials.

In the collection of films given to DC-Cam, prosecutors argue that two in particular have relevance to Duch's case:

"The first relevant segment is 7 minutes and 35 seconds in duration, and consists of black and white silent motion picture images that appear to depict the central S-21 compound in the immediate aftermath of its discovery by Vietnamese forces on or about 10 January 1979. The images include scenes of the main gate of the S-21 central compound, overview scenes of the interior of the compound, and scenes of various types of cells and restraint devices within the S-21 central compound and decapitated corpses chained to beds in Building A of the compound, among other things."

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The second film clip, "is four minutes in duration and consists of black and white silent motion picture images that appear to depict Vietnamese soldiers removing two live infants and two live children from the S-21 compound, also in the aftermath of its discovery by Vietnamese forces. ... The infants seen in the film appear to be in very poor health."

According to the prosecutors, "this is the only film footage known to have been taken of Tuol Sleng that close in time to the period when it was used as a DK prison."

It is unclear to me if this issue is going to be discussed at Duch's Initial Hearing Feb. 17, or if it will be decided beforehand. Court spokespeople were unable to comment on the matter.

This does indeed appear to be very powerful footage, however, and it's hard to imagine it not being presented at trial.

Also in anticipation of Duch's trial, court observers [have told the Post](#) that a decision on whether to pursue additional prosecutions at the ECCC should be reached before the Feb. 17 hearing.

** Pictured: An unidentified prisoner is photographed at Tuol Sleng.*