

Genocide Education for National Police Officers

Organized by

Documentation Center of Cambodia in Collaboration with
the Police Academy of Cambodia (PAC) of the Ministry of the Interior

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On December 6, 2010, the Cambodian government tasked the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) with training university lecturers and professors on teaching the history of the Khmer Rouge period, known as the Democratic Kampuchea period (1975-1979). The decision stems from the Cambodian government's mandate of October 2009 that required all first year university students to study the history of Democratic Kampuchea. On July 25-27, 2011, DC-Cam succeeded in holding its first-ever university lecturer training with over 100 lecturers and professors from 94 higher education institutions throughout Cambodia.



ANDREW CAYLEY

In an effort to broaden the teaching of the Democratic Kampuchea history, DC-Cam has begun cooperating with the Police Academy of Cambodia (PAC). This will enable three hundred police officers to engage in discussion and attend lectures by national and international guest speakers. Each lecture will concentrate on the use of all kinds of security forces under the Khmer Rouge's ideology and policies that contributed to the deaths of nearly two million people. To understand these scenarios, the lectures aim at analyzing historical context through social science and legal approaches.

International Co-Prosecutor Andrew Cayley of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) will discuss his experience in the British military and his analysis on prospects for the Khmer Rouge trials at the ECCC. Prof. Ros Chantraboth of the Royal Academy of Cambodia will present and analyze the historical events in the lead up to the Khmer Rouge's takeover of Cambodia. Mr. Dy Khamboly, author of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)" will examine Khmer Rouge policies and other root causes of the killing that took place during the Democratic Kampuchea period. Khmer Rouge-related films will also be screened to generate discussion.

Discussing and learning such a difficult history is never easy. Due to personal traumas and/or political affiliations, teachers often avoid teaching any Khmer Rouge history. Likewise, some students also resist acknowledging this past, as children of former

perpetrators often attend school with and live side-by-side with children of victims. Dr. Kar Sunbaunath will discuss this topic along with the documentary films made by the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese army in 1979.

Despite these challenges, proper knowledge of history is important for any individual or society to reconcile with the past. As His Excellency, Mr. Im Sethy, the Minister of Education, Youth, and Sport has said: *"Younger generations of Cambodians must understand and know about this grave past in order to learn from past mistakes, prevent such events from happening again, and recognize and know when to stand up for fundamental principles of humanity, integrity, and justice."*

Through their studies, the three hundred police officers will be expected to understand more about the history of the Khmer Rouge through practices of analyzing and evaluating Khmer Rouge ideology and policies; receiving oral histories from survivors; comparing notes with their elders; identifying the root causes of genocide; examining state-sponsored terror in the lead-up to the killings; evaluating the current effects on the Cambodian society; fostering compassion, empathy and reconciliation; and thinking critically about how to prevent future mass atrocities in Cambodia and the rest of the world.



The training for National Police Officers is one long-term educational mechanism designed to help prevent future genocides and promote tolerance, forgiveness and reconciliation. More specifically, this training is an important opportunity to foster respect for human rights and democracy in Cambodia.

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