

Dear Community Radio of Documentation Center of Cambodia:

Having listened to four of your episodes on the Khmer Rouge famine, I feel shock and sorrow for the Cambodian people who died during the Khmer Rouge regime. From your program, I have learned that about 800,000 or even more people died particularly of starvation, lack of food or bad living conditions during the Khmer Rouge period. I also understand that approximately 3 million Cambodians (40% of the population) died overall during the Khmer Rouge period.¹ The most unbelievable thing is that some survivors have said that starvation led to the eating of human flesh. Some people had killed their own relatives or other members in the cooperative for their flesh. Moreover, I learned how the lack of sanitation also caused the death of many people and how stealing food was a reason for potential execution. I believe now that the causes of death of people during the Khmer Rouge regime were mostly due to lack of food and overwork.

All the stories above are the true history which Cambodian people faced during the Khmer Rouge regime. Therefore, as the younger generation, I believe we should read and learn more about this history in order to prevent this regime from happening again. At the same time, I would like to see the Khmer Rouge famine or starvation be discussed or charged in Case 002 by the Khmer Rouge Tribunal in order to give justice for the Cambodian people who had endured so much suffering during the Khmer Rouge Regime.²

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¹ Editor's note: DC-Cam's radio program has not made any claims concerning the overall death toll during the Khmer Rouge period in Cambodia and as such, it appears that these figures are drawn from another source. It is possible that the figure of 3 million deaths is attributable to a widely distributed film produced by the People's Republic of Kampuchea government in the 1980s which used the phrase "3+4" standing for the proposition that for every 7 Cambodian citizens, 3 died and 4 survived during the Khmer Rouge period. The film also stated the total death toll at 3 million out of Cambodia's estimated 1975 population of 7 million people and roughly equates 40% of the population.

² Translated by Lorn Dalin, staff member of DC-Cam's Radio Project