

ការជម្លៀសដោយបង្ខំនៅក្នុងរបបខ្មែរក្រហម

THE FORCED TRANSFER:

The Second Evacuation of People During the Khmer Rouge Regime



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By the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the Documentation Center of Cambodia

A collaborative project between the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), the Museum of Memory is pleased to announce the opening ceremony of "Forced Transfer during the Khmer Rouge Regime" exhibition at Kampong Thom provincial museum from August 22, 2014 onward which the first two exhibitions had been already installed in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey provincial museums. The first phase of the museum exhibition project includes the creation and management of five provincial museum exhibitions in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Thom, Takeo and Sihanouk Ville.

The Museum of Memory Project chose to highlight "Forced Transfer" in their exhibitions due to Case 002/01 of the ECCC and its focus on prosecuting crimes related to the forced transfer of the Cambodian population during the Khmer Rouge. A common motif throughout each of the provincial museums will be the exhibitions use of a train to display information. The forced transfer of people by train, along with separation, starvation, execution and genocide, touched nearly every geographic region of Cambodia.

On 17 April 1975, the Khmer Rouge forces entered Phnom Penh and began the first phase of what they described as an 'evacuation.' This phase would later be classified as forced transfer. The Khmer Rouge classified Cambodians into groups. People from Phnom Penh were identified as "New People" or "17 April People," while people who were deemed to be loyal to the regime were identified as "Base People." "New People" were often discriminated against because of the notion that they were from an urban, Western, wealthy upbringing. During this phase, Phnom Penh was emptied of all its inhabitants. Men and women of all professions, the elderly, children and monks, as well as sick people from hospitals, pregnant women, and new mothers were forced to leave the city. While trains were a common vessel to transfer the people, many people were also forced to leave on foot, heading in all directions along the country's national roads. The people were told to return to their birthplace but many had no place to return. People slept on roads or under trees—wherever they could quickly rest their eyes. Rice alone fueled many of their long journeys. The people suffered serious health issues including swelling in their limbs, dehydration and exhaustion. In all, close to a million people were forced to leave the city and it is estimated that up to 3,000 people died along the way.

Besides Battambang province, Kampong Thom is well known for the rice production. To achieve high productivity, the Khmer Rouge demanded a lot of water reservoirs such as dams, dikes or canals. Many people evacuated from different places including new/city people were assigned to build the dams to reserve the water for cultivating rice. The big well-known one in Kampong Thom was 1 January Dam--*Tum Nup 1 Makara*. According to DC-Cam's mapping report, Kampong Thom is dotted with 17 crime sites where are situated in Baray, Kampong Svay, Stung Sen, Prasat Balang, Prasat Sambor, Sandan, Santuk, and Stong districts. A significant but unknown portion of these deaths is attributable to the construction of dams. As survivors recalled, people were forced to work as slaves to satisfy the production goals set by the CPK Center (Communist Party of

Kampuchea), while their social welfare needs were totally ignored, leading to widespread death from disease, exhaustion, and execution. The people suffered until January 1979 when the regime's ranks and files were toppled.

The opening ceremony of the exhibition at Kampong Thom provincial museum will be held on August 22, 2014 at 14:00 p.m. in Kampong Thom provincial museums. Civil Parties and complainants before the Khmer Rouge Tribunal and students who are residing at Kampong Thom provincial town are invited to attend the ceremony and to participate in discussion about their life story under the Khmer Rouge regime and the current reconciliation processes in Cambodia. Students will be able to reflect on the lives and experiences of the victims and survivors under the regime.

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Note: No reception

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