



Yale News

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Bearing Witness: Cambodian Genocide Program Releases Key Data

New Haven, CT — The Cambodian Genocide Program at Yale University will release information on the Internet today that details atrocities committed under the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia, 1975-79. Approximately 1.7 million Cambodians are believed to have perished under that regime, headed by Pol Pot. The new World Wide Web site, <http://www.yale.edu/cgp>, is the product of two years of intensive work funded by grants from the U.S. State Department, the Australian government, and several private foundations.

The Henry Luce Foundation, Inc. has made a grant of \$250,000 for further research at Yale. The Dutch government has agreed to provide \$160,000 for training and related program activities in Cambodia. And the Yale Institute for Biospheric Studies has donated \$10,000 for computerized mapping of mass graves of victims of the genocide. Additional funding is being sought.

"The information we are releasing on the Internet represents the most comprehensive collection of data ever assembled on Khmer Rouge violations of human rights, and includes a large amount of previously unknown material. We expect that this information will be of great interest to human rights activists, legal researchers, scholars, Cambodian citizens, and others concerned with the tragedy of Cambodia," says Ben Kiernan, director of the Cambodian Genocide Program, a native of Melbourne, Australia, and author of "The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979," published by Yale University Press in 1996.

The information to be released on the Internet documents extensive crimes against humanity committed by Pol Pot and his followers, some of whom retain control over parts of Cambodia, in defiance of the official government headed by King Norodom Sihanouk. Others who committed

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mass murder under the Khmer Rouge remain at large.

The WWW site has been developed by the Cambodian Genocide Program (CGP) in collaboration with a team led by Dr. Helen Jarvis, CGP documentation consultant and head of the School of Information, Library and Archive Studies at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. The site is divided into four data bases, augmented by a bulletin board that includes photographs and extensive excerpts from a secret diary of the former foreign ministry, headed by Ieng Sary from 1975 to 1979. In September, the king of Cambodia granted a limited amnesty to Mr. Sary when he broke with the rebel forces led by his brother-in-law, Pol Pot. The two have been linked to the killing of hundreds of thousands of Cambodians.

"We are very excited that the Cambodian Genocide Program has been able to attract additional support, because we have much more work to do," says Craig Etcheson, manager of the CGP. "Even though the data we are publishing today represents a highly incriminating indictment of Khmer Rouge brutality, the largest part of the new information we have discovered remains to be prepared for publication on the Internet. These grants will allow us to greatly expand the amount of information available to governments who may wish to pursue legal sanctions for Khmer Rouge crimes against humanity."

The data bases are organized into five sections:

- An annotated bibliography of all documents, books, and articles currently available on the Khmer Rouge regime. This will be updated on a regular basis.
- Biographical information on approximately 5,000 Khmer Rouge leaders, some of whom became victims. Primary sources were used in assembling these data, including about 200 interviews Professor Kiernan conducted with survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime, and the complete personnel files of the Khmer Rouge central prison in Phnom Penh. The biographical section will also be expanded in future releases.

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- Mug shots taken by the Khmer Rouge of more than 5,000 prisoners whom they subsequently executed. Most of the victims in the photos are unidentified. A response form allows Internet users to help identify the victims.

- Geographical information, including a series of hyperlinked maps, tables, and other images locating mass graves, Khmer Rouge prisons, execution sites, and memorials. To date, 37 of Cambodia's 172 districts have been surveyed. The remaining districts will be added to the data base as surveys are completed.

- Bulletin board, containing a collection of photos, a complete listing of the Khmer Rouge central prison staff, and translated excerpts from the diary of Ieng Sary's Foreign Ministry.

In addition to assembling and posting the data bases, the Cambodian Genocide Program pursues research and offers training in the United States and in Cambodia. Future research is expected to yield books and monographs that will join the half-dozen studies already completed under the program.

The training segment, carried out in conjunction with Dr. Jarvis of the University of New South Wales, teaches Cambodians documentation skills, text-based research, and field work. The CGP has held two 10-week courses for Cambodian lawyers and human rights activists on how to organize investigations for a human rights tribunal or truth commission.

In 1995 the CGP established the Documentation Center of Cambodia in Phnom Penh to facilitate field operations and train Cambodians in research and investigative techniques. Now, after two years, the Documentation Center has become an independent research institute for the study of the Khmer Rouge genocide, with a large archive of original documents. Youk Chhang, former United Nations staff member and survivor of the genocide, has been named executive director of the Center. He is assisted by an all-Cambodian board of directors.

Interviews with Mr. Kiernan, Mr. Etcheson, Ms. Jarvis, and Mr. Chhang can be arranged, as well as demonstrations of the web site.