



Cambodia marks annual Day of Anger against Khmer Rouge May 20, 2010

Phnom Penh - Hundreds of Cambodians marked the annual Day of Anger against the Khmer Rouge regime Thursday at a former killing field outside the capital. The cornerstone of the ceremony was a play in which a dozen Cambodians dressed as Khmer Rouge soldiers acted out executions in a reminder of the mass killings that characterized the regime that ruled from 1975 to 1979.

Pa Socheatvong, the deputy governor of Phnom Penh, said the purpose was to remember those who died during the Khmer Rouge regime.

The movement was led by Pol Pot, also known as Brother Number One.

"Pol Pot betrayed the country by using the people's blood as capital, so people are very angry with the Pol Pot regime," Pa Socheatvong told the German Press Agency dpa.

The event was first held in 1984, five years after the Khmer Rouge was driven from power.

Pa Socheatvong said the May 20 date was selected since it was on that day in 1976 that the Khmer Rouge leadership took the decision to kill people.

"They made it the strategy of their genocidal regime," he said.

Thursday's ceremony was held at Chhoeung Ek, which was where thousands of Cambodians from the regime's main security prison known as S-21 were executed.

Both Chhoeung Ek and S-21 are popular sites for tourists visiting the capital.

Last year, S-21's commander, Comrade Duch, appeared before a joint UN-Cambodian tribunal charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Judgement in Duch's case is expected in the coming months.

Four former Khmer Rouge leaders are currently in detention in Phnom Penh ahead of their trial which is likely to start early next year.

An estimated 1.7 million people died during the Khmer Rouge's rule of Cambodia from execution, overwork, starvation and illness.