



Clinton visits Cambodian genocide museum November 1, 2010

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton toured Cambodia's genocide museum on Monday during a visit to the capital in which she is expected to urge the country to respect human rights and fight corruption.

Clinton, on a two-week Asia tour, arrived in Phnom Penh from the tourist hub of

Siem Reap and set off to visit Tuol Sleng prison, the main interrogation and torture centre of the Khmer Rouge regime in the late 1970s.



US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (C) meets with the director of Documentation Center of Cambodia, Youk Chhang (R) at the Tuol Sleng genocide museum in Phnom Penh on November 1, 2010.

Thousands of inmates were taken from the jail -- now one of the main tourist attractions in Phnom Penh -- for execution in a nearby orchard that served as a "Killing Field".

A sombre-looking Clinton studied the dozens of black-and-white photos of gaunt-faced prisoners on display, along with dozens of skulls of victims and paintings by a former prisoner of people being tortured.

Clinton, on the first visit to Cambodia by a US secretary of state since 2003, is due later to meet Cambodia's King Norodom Sihamoni, Prime Minister Hun Sen and Foreign Minister Hor Namhong.

The chief US diplomat "will stress the importance of a credible opposition and respect for human rights" and "will emphasise the need to fight corruption and improve transparency in all parts of the government", the US embassy said in a statement.

She will also meet with opposition leaders "to highlight the importance of a vibrant political arena where all voices are heard," it said.

Rights groups Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have urged Clinton to take a stand against Cambodian threats to close the UN human rights office in the capital.

Cambodia is also opposing a third trial of regime leaders.

In July, a UN-backed war crimes court sentenced Tuol Sleng prison chief Kaing Guek Eav, better known as Duch, to 30 years in jail for overseeing the deaths of 15,000 men, women and children in the late 1970s.

He was the first former Khmer Rouge cadre to face justice over crimes committed under the brutal communist regime.

Last month the court indicted four top regime leaders for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in connection with the deaths of up to two million people from starvation, overwork and execution between 1975 and 1979.

Led by "Brother Number One" Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge was responsible for one of the worst horrors of the 20th century, wiping out nearly a quarter of Cambodia's population through starvation, overwork and executions.

On Sunday, Clinton toured Cambodia's Angkor Wat temples in the northwestern tourist hub of Siem Reap and visited a shelter and rehabilitation centre for victims of sex trafficking.

She had arrived from China's Hainan island, where she briefly met Chinese officials following her attendance at a regional summit in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi.