

Khmer Krom Victims Say Tribunal Overlooked Kill Site Kong Sothanarith August 11, 2011

Former Khmer Rouge cadres, Khoem Keng, center, Lai Sim, second from right, line up before the second trial to the top leaders of Khmer Rouge at the outside the court hall of the U.N.-backed war crimes tribunal, on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Monday, June 27, 2011. Now old and infirm, four of the top surviving members of the Khmer Rouge's ruling elite are about to face justice, decades after their plans for a Communist utopia in Cambodia left an estimated 1.7 million people dead by execution, medical neglect, overwork and starvation.

Lawyers for ethnic Khmer Kampuchea Krom victims of the Khmer Rouge say the UN-backed Khmer Rouge tribunal has failed to include an extermination site in the scope of its investigations.

The Khmer Krom, who are a minority Khmer ethnic group living in today's Vietnam and the Mekong Delta, were singled out for killing by the regime for being culturally tied to Vietnam.

Lawyers for Khmer Krom civil party applicants said investigating judges failed to release information on the Bakan execution site in Pursat province when they released details of their work earlier this week.

Between 500 and 700 Khmer Krom were killed at the site, according to the Documentation Center of Cambodia.

On Monday, investigating judges released details of proposed crimes sites under Case 004, which victims say they need in order to file under the court's rules for civil parties. The sites covered six different provinces, but did not include Bakan.

Sam Sokong, a lawyer representing about 100 Khmer Krom victims of the regime, said nearly all the people at the site were killed.

"There were only three families left," he said. "They need justice, and they want to give witness."