



**Film Tracks Inner Workings of Khmer Rouge
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Enemies of the People explores inner workings of former Cambodian regime through interviews with Khmer Rouge's second-in-command

A decade in the making, a documentary showing at the Sundance Film Festival explores the inner workings of the former Cambodian regime through hundreds of hours of interviews with the Khmer Rouge's second-in-command. *Enemies of the People*, which was shown at the independent film festival held in Park City, Utah, is the result of a collaboration between Cambodian journalist Thet Sambath and Briton Rob Lemkin.

Up to two million people, a quarter of Cambodia's population, were executed or died of torture, starvation and overwork under the 1975-1979 regime led by Pol Pot.

Cambodian journalist Thet Sambath paid a heavy price. He lost his father, mother and older brother. That profound loss led him on a decade-long journey into the "killing fields" of his homeland to try to understand why his family and so many others were murdered. The result of his work is "Enemies of the People," which Sambath co-directed and produced with British filmmaker Rob Lemkin.

The documentary has received the World Cinema Special Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival.

"This award is very meaningful," said Sambath. "It is not only for me, but an honor for all Cambodians. On the other hand, it is very significant that it will encourage more former Khmer Rouge cadres who committed wrongdoings to come out and tell the media about the truth because I made this documentary with cooperation from Nuon Chea and his honesty. He was honest about decisions to kill Cambodians from 1975 to 1979."

After extensive research and interviews, Sambath was lead to Pol Pot's second-in-command, Nuon Chea.

The film revolves around the relationship Sambath established with Chea, who was called "Brother Number Two" and was dictator Pol Pot's chief advisor.

It took Sambath years of gaining Chea's trust before he admitted that he and Pol Pot

had plotted the killings as a means of defending their communist vision from "enemies of the people."

The interviews took place at Chea's small home near the Thai border, in Pailin, one of the last Khmer Rouge strongholds.

In the film, Chea tries to justify the Khmer Rouge's plan.

"Our project was to transform the nature of society," said Chea. "We did not allow private ownership of anything - land or factories. All of this came under collective control. But those who did not want change became set against us. Ours was a clean regime, a clear-sighted regime [and] a peaceful regime. That was our aim, but we failed because the enemy's spies attacked and sabotaged us from the start."

Sambeth also tracked down several of the Khmer Rouge's soldiers, mostly peasants and farmers who say they were simply "following orders" when they slit the throats of their neighbors and buried them in mass graves.

Many former Khmer Rouge troops now live low-profile lives in rural Cambodia, having changed their names to hide their violent past.

Sambeth kept his recorded conversations with Nuon Chea under lock and key for years, fearing that they would be confiscated and used as evidence in a trial.

The film ends with Chea's arrest by a joint force of the United Nations and Cambodia. He is charged with crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide. His trial is scheduled for 2011.

The Khmer Rouge remains a sensitive subject in Cambodia. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge cadre who defected, strongly opposes trying more suspects by the U.N. court, warning that it could ignite another civil war.